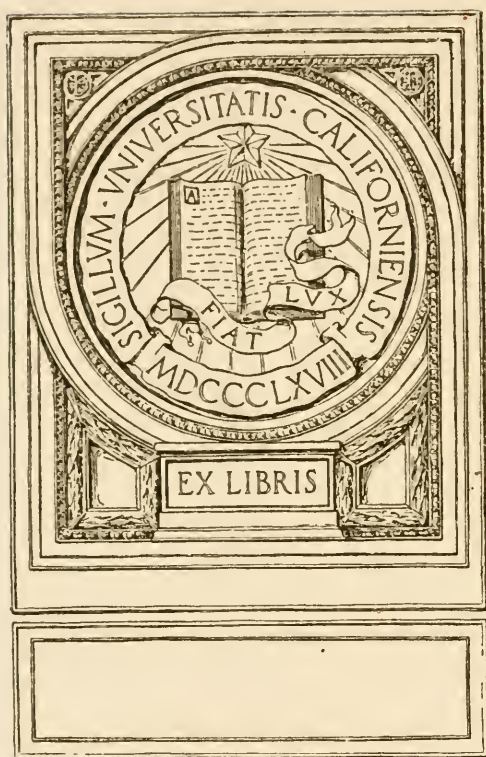


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Vol. I, No. 3 PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW PUBLICATIONS MARCH, 1916

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FREEDOM AND PURPOSE

An Interpretation of the Psychology of

SPINOZA

By

JAMES H. DUNHAM, PH.D.

Professor of Philosophy, Temple University, Philadelphia



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PREFACE

The following essay is an attempt to interpret Spinoza's ideas of human consciousness in terms of modern psychology. It is extremely hazardous to project the feelings and methods of one age into the mental habits of earlier thinkers. The difficulty is of a peculiar kind when we examine the shell of scholastic formulae from which the author never wholly released himself. Nevertheless, the consensus of opinion has given him a place second to none among the progenitors of the scientific study of mind. Indeed, he is held by some, and with good reason, to be the unwitting founder of the historic school known as Parallelism. Be this as it may, it is certain that no man before the rise of empirical methods understood as well as he the meaning and scope of psychic conation. The structural phenomena of the organism were hidden from his view, but their functional values, which we now subsume under the rubric of teleology, were grasped with an accuracy that astonishes the inquirer.

We submit the results of our study not as a complete account of the Spinozistic philosophy—for the inquiry is limited to a particular field—but as a practical solution of a problem which has persistently vexed the reader of the *Ethics*. Freedom, in whatsoever manner described, reveals a network of unexplained difficulties. The mesh grows thicker and more tangled if we treat Spinoza's problem in the cavalier fashion usually accorded it. Either freedom vanishes altogether, or its terms become tantalisingly vague. The form of argument which we have adopted allows room for the scientific verification of material. Its virtue, if any, lies here.

We cannot undertake to list the array of authorities consulted,—on the one side the direct expositors of the text, on the other the standard works on the meaning of consciousness. It is not invidious, however, to single out two books, which have measurably affected the framing of our conclusions, viz., Joa-

PREFACE

chim's *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* and Hobhouse's *Development and Purpose*.

One word of personal acknowledgment should be added. For the initial suggestion of subject and repeated counsels in its unfolding, the writer is indebted to Professor Edgar A. Singer, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania.

The references in the body of the essay are from the *Ethics*, except as otherwise noted, and are cited by book and proposition. When the page is named the reference is to the authoritative Latin text of VanVloten and Land. It will appear that the English translation by Elwees in the Bohn Library has been freely used, as being in most cases substantially correct.

Philadelphia,
January 1, 1916.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF SERVITUDE

The philosophy of Spinoza is first of all a transcript of his own experience. He found himself confronted with a serious problem, and he set about solving it to the best of his ability. He was conscious of two facts, the inflexibility of the natural order, together with his own inevitable place therein, and a well defined sense of freedom. Could these two facts be reconciled? The method proposed has been variously appraised by succeeding thinkers. Some have scorned it; others have altered its terms, so as to bring it into agreement with their own views; a third group have enthusiastically accepted it as a new Gospel. But whatever be the critical attitude of his readers, for him it was sufficient, and for him it became a genuine confession of faith. Let us understand at the outset his idea of human servitude.

I

The world in which we live, viewed as extended substance, can only be conceived as one and indivisible. For if it could be divided as sense-perception avers, then each segment would or would not possess all the properties of substance. If it did, infinity, e.g., could be predicated of each, and we should have an infinite number of infinite segments; if it did not, then the whole of substance having been divided into finite parts must surely lose its original character. Both alternatives, however, are absurd.¹ To prove the same thing from another angle, let us suppose that a particular segment is destroyed, the other parts remaining unchanged in position. Immediately a vacuum is created; but as this is abhorrent to nature, all its parts being *obliged* to seek a junction, we conclude that quantitative divisions are inconceivable. From this point of view nature is a continuum; and all objects, such as water, which the individuat-

¹ I, 12.

ing eye distinguishes as separate, are only modal variations, undulations on the unbroken sea, by means of which fundamental unity is expressed.²

But it is extremely difficult for the mind to grasp the idea of unqualified substance, inured as it is to the presence and activity of individuals. Let us approach the case from the opposite direction. We deal at once with simple bodies, exhibiting the most primary properties, viz., rest and motion. These may be compounded with one another, the aggregate maintaining a due relation in its parts, even though the modes of motion be changed. If now we advance another step and combine compound individuals, the product will include a great variety of possible modifications, let us say organic reactions, or orbital movements, without working any change in the new nature. By continuing this process to infinity, we at length reach the conception of the whole of nature, *tota facies mundi*, an individual whose parts undergo an infinite and infinitely complex variety of changes, without endangering the unity of the whole.³ Nature as thus conceived is not a dreary waste of substance, with nothing upon which the mind can seize; it is stocked with bodies of different degrees of "animation", that is, with different meanings as related to the whole.⁴ The upshot of this view is that the world cannot be conceived without its parts,⁵ the smallest organ and the most fleeting idea having their appointed place in the universal system, because they form the modes by which the attributes of God (or nature) are expressed in a fixed and definite manner.⁶

Given, then, a world whose continuity is not interrupted, but defined by its modal parts, we inquire next how the parts are related to one another. That relationship is causal. Everything that exists, exists either through itself or something else.⁷ If it exist through something else, it will be the effect of a cause.⁸ Thus, a body at rest cannot supply its own impulse to motion; it

² I, 15, Scholium (=Sch.).

³ II, Lem. 7, Sch.

⁴ II, 13, Sch.

⁵ IV, 2.

⁶ I, 25, Corollary (=C.).

⁷ I, Ax. i.

⁸ I, Ax. iii.

must be moved by another body. Nor can a body in motion come to rest without the interposition of a second body.⁹ In measuring the exact amount of work done we must take account of the texture of bodies in contact, hard, soft, or fluid. If the impinging body fails to move a body at rest, the effect of the motion is measured by the recoil of the first object, the path of the subsequent motion being determined by the angle of incidence.¹⁰ Again, the constitution of compound bodies is a more intricate application of the same principle. For the constituent parts are determined to their relative positions by the "compulsion" of other bodies and their reciprocal motions preserve a fixed ratio among themselves.¹¹

If now we examine the world as a whole, we find the un-deviating dependence of one individual upon another. Every thing is determined to exist or to act by another thing determined in the same way, in a regress that goes to infinity.¹² Take an example. A stone is dislodged from its place on the roof, and falls to the ground, killing a passing pedestrian. The cause of the event was a tempestuous wind that came in from the sea. The wind was raised by the agitation of the sea on the preceding day. The agitation of the waves was produced by a definite cause, a mechanical series thus beginning which cannot be closed until its every member has been ascertained. But inasmuch as the number of links in the chain is infinite, we can never reach the ultimate cause of a particular act, and must simply say that all things which are, are in God (or nature) and so depend on Him; that without Him they can neither be nor be conceived. We do not thereby give up the pursuit of a mechanical ideal as an explanation of the world, and take refuge in the "sanctuary of ignorance", the will or purpose of God. Final causes cannot explain how a particular thing is determined in space and time. For in the first place the dogma reverses the actual order of events, taking the cause from its position of priority and making it the effect. It removes, also, the element of perfection from the world as immediately constituted and argues that perfection

⁹ II, Lem. iii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Ax. i, ii.

¹¹ II, Lem. iii. Definition.

¹² I, 28.

can only be attained when purpose is realized. "If the immediate creations of God were made with a view to His attaining a certain end, then the last things for which the first were made must be the most excellent of all".¹³

Mechanism on the other hand insists that everything is determined to existence, and to a particular state of existence by God, that is, by the laws of nature. It affirms that a definite effect always follows a definite cause, the essence in each being the same,¹⁴ that the only way to estimate the power of a cause is to compare the essential natures of the affecting and affected bodies.¹⁵ Thus, if man be the effect, we must look for the cause not in the lifeless stone, but in the germinating seed. If the nature of the tree be the cause, we must look for the effect not in articulate sounds, such as men utter, but in umbrageous foliage or luscious fruit.¹⁶ Moreover, the principle of causality concerns not only the nature of the bodies, but their numerical status. To account for a group of similar individuals the determination of the essence, e.g., man, is not enough; we must also determine why there is a prescribed number of them. Let us posit twenty men, existing simultaneously and without mutual relationship. They possess the same properties and can be understood by the same formulas. But the definition of finite things does not involve existence;¹⁷ the nature of man does not require that there should be twenty units of the class at the same time. Hence, we are forced to seek a causal nexus for each one in turn, in order to understand why he exists.¹⁸ In other words, mechanism lays its grip upon every element in nature, forces it into an infinite regress of causes, and sets upon it the ineradicable mark of necessity.¹⁹ There is nothing contingent in the wide spaces of the universe; nothing, that is to say, which is dependent on the operation of causes whose entrance into the sphere of influence we cannot positively determine.²⁰

Still another fact confronts us; the rule of causality can not be broken. When a body has been endowed with certain prop-

¹³ I, App.

¹⁴ I, Def. 4.

¹⁵ V, Ax. ii.

¹⁶ I, 8, Sch. ii.

¹⁷ I, 24.

¹⁸ I, 8, Sch.

¹⁹ I, 29.

²⁰ I, 33, Sch. i.

erties, and conditioned to act in a certain way, it can never disavow its condition; it can never act in a different fashion.²¹ The most conspicuous interruption to the natural order is alleged to have occurred in the miracles of religion. They have woven themselves so intimately into the faith of the masses and are so manifestly the instruments of priestcraft for cementing its authority, that any one who attempts to examine them as natural phenomena, links in the causal chain, is branded as an impious heretic. Nevertheless we are warranted in inquiring into their character, proceeding on the assumption that the order of nature is immutable, as the being of God.²² It will then appear that a miracle has no meaning, except in relation to the opinion of men. For it reflects not an activity in the mechanical world, but the limits of human knowledge. It is an event whose cause cannot be explained by those principles which natural reason has deduced from observed phenomena. In many of the recorded miracles an uncritical age declined to institute a search into causes, a search which would doubtless have removed once and for all the unusual character of the event. The necessity of mechanism remains unimpaired.²³

From a different point of view the application of this rule is denied. Men allege there is a break in the observed order. Sensations pressing thick and fast upon consciousness give us the impression of a confused, unarticulated mass. They do not conform to the sequence and order with which we have hedged natural phenomena. Disharmonies in sights and sounds, fetid, decomposing matter, bitterness or insipidity in taste, disease, inequalities in social condition,—these are to us evidences of an unbalanced scheme of nature; we are wont to charge it up against the inadequacy of the governing rule, forgetting that our “order” is simply a synthesis of the sensuous manifold, a concept of the understanding. In nature there is no “order”, there is nothing but irresistible law.²⁴ Everything is determined to act in a particular way, and in that way it must act. More than that, it is the only way in which it could act; that is to say, the world in

²¹ I, 27.

²³ Trac. Theol. Pol. I, 446.

²² I, App.

²⁴ I, App.

which we live, and all its constituent parts, could have assumed no other form, developed no other causal series, than that which science reveals. The argument adduced by Spinoza to prove this point is strictly scholastic; you could not make a new nature without making a new substance, which would mean the constructing of two infinities, an absurd proposition. But there is an empirical basis for his contention; for, granting the physicist's principle, the conservation of energy, we are assured that however much you may alter the relations of individuals you cannot reduce the actual amount of force at work within the world. Hence, all speculation as to what might have happened is on the face of it inept. The fact remains inevitable and emphatic,—the rule of causality is universal.

II

To the rule as thus formulated the body of man does not present an exception. It follows in every detail the laws of physics and chemistry. Man comes into existence through the medium of a necessary cause, that is, by the action of another body, and is determined to his particular form and function by forces over which he has no control.²⁵ His corporeal constituents are precisely the same as those which enter into the making of a purely mechanical body, e.g., a planet. Like it his organization is not simple, but a congeries of minute and infinitely diversified bodies. Like it, too, his component parts reveal the usual variety of texture, hard, soft, fluid. He is affected by the same impact of foreign bodies, while all the organs and functions within the compound sustain an undeviating relation to one another.²⁶ The vegetative system requires the introduction of bodies from without for its constant "regeneration"—a fact which apparently unique to organic structure may yet be paralleled by magnetic influences in unorganized bodies. Again, the human body receives impressions through the sense-organs, in such a way that the impressions endure after the stimulus is removed, by virtue of the fact that the fluid parts of our body impinge on the softer

²⁵ I, 17, Sch.

²⁶ Cf. II, Lem. vi.

* parts of the same and register there an effect, undisturbed until a new reaction is set up. This transaction is subject to the common calculus of chemistry.

Man has also a reciprocating power; he can "do work" on his neighbor; he can "arrange" external bodies in various ways, especially by bodily motion, or change of place.²⁷ It is therefore true to say that man is conformed to nature in an almost infinite number of ways,²⁸ that he is inexorably a part of nature, and cannot undergo any changes save such as are determined by the laws of physical activity, his own body as well as outside forces being examined;²⁹ and that his every act mirrors the general constitution of the world and not exclusively the properties which make him a man.³⁰ In this way he fulfills the universal axiom that there is in nature no individual thing which is not surpassed in intrinsic strength by another individual, and which consequently is liable to destruction by it.³¹ The axiom is empirically verifiable, and in no case more clearly than in the life of man. Man thus becomes a member of the causal series, which grows ever more powerful in its regress. The slightest experience proves to him that his own power is infinitely exceeded by the power of external causes.

But the account of man which we have so far given has made no reference to intellect as the special endowment of our subject. This is the element which is thought to distinguish him from other objects in nature, even conscious animals. It must be his certificate of freedom, if he have any. We therefore ask, how mental processes arise and what relation they bear to body. The primary fact is, that the order and nexus of ideas is the same as the order and nexus of things.³² For every individual in the world there is an idea in the mind of God, since he is both thought and extension; that is, everything has a "mind".³³ But man alone of all modes is able to express his ideas in language; hence his experience must be studied in order to ascertain the relation between mind and body. Now the first element in con-

²⁷ II, Posts. i-vi.

²⁸ IV, App. vi.

²⁹ IV, 4.

³⁰ IV, 37, Sch.

³¹ IV, Ax.

³² II, 7.

³³ II, 13, Sch.

sciousness, the fact which first makes us aware that there is such a thing as mind, is the idea of an existing object, viz., the body.³⁴ The relation between them is indestructible. The moment a reaction, even of the most rudimentary kind, takes place in body, the mind registers its image as an idea. Mental action corresponds point by point with physical changes; the concomitance is exact.³⁵ Hence, the finer the articulation of the organs of body, and the acuter the senses to receive and co-ordinate their perceptions, that is to say, the greater the reactive power of body, the more fitted will mind be to work the sensuous manifold into a conceptual system. In other words, percept and concept are inevitably joined; there is no distinction between them.³⁶ The mind is not a plastic surface, a *tabula rasa*, on which images are successively engraved. It is another aspect of body, just as body is another aspect of mind. What happens to one happens simultaneously to the other, whether the "happening" be viewed from the standpoint of ideas or their objective equivalent.³⁷

Now we know what happens to body, and from these data we can judge what happens to mind. When the body is affected by external forces, the impact of the affection is registered in consciousness. The mind, however, does not perceive the nature of the impinging body, except as it is mediated through the constitution of its own body.³⁸ Thus, Peter's idea of Paul will be different from Paul's idea of himself, inasmuch as the one passes through the sense-organs of the observer, while the other is the product of a man's experience with his own organic system. The modification of body determines the image in the mind.³⁹ When, then, two or more sensations occur simultaneously in the mind, the return of one of them will induce a modification, kindred to that sustained when both were present. This is possible because the body retains the impression of an external agent even after its withdrawal, and until such impression has been effaced by a new sensation. On this basis memory cannot be an originative act of the mind; it is the sequence of images, caused

³⁴ II, 11.³⁶ I, 14.³⁸ II, 16, Cor.³⁵ II, 12.³⁷ V, 1.³⁹ II, 17, Sch.

by corresponding reactions in the body. For example, the soldier sees the prints of the horses' hoofs in the sand and at once conjures up the image of a horse, a horseman, and the tumult of battle; while a farmer observing the same tracks would think of the plow, the furrow, and the hard-working animal. In this way, too, objects which have no natural affinities are joined together; as when a Roman hearing the word *pomum*, would at once think of the fruit bearing that name, the two images having nothing in common except the fact that both had at the same moment produced modifications in the percipient's senses.⁴⁰ One conclusion alone can be deduced from these considerations, viz., that the mind is framed to think in a particular way, by a definite cause, which in turn is subject to a like determination, until a causal series develops in the operation of mind, parallel to, and as rigorous as, that which governs the affections of body.⁴¹

But to many students of human nature such a conclusion is obnoxious. They cannot understand how the laws of physics or chemistry can be the sole and originating "causes of pictures, buildings, and all things of that kind, which are produced only by human act." They affirm that the body of man, unguided by the mind, is incapable of unfolding the genius, enshrined in a classic temple. We answer that no one has as yet explored the resources stored within the body's confines. The fineness of texture, the complexity of organization, far transcending the products of art, are such that they may of themselves account for many esthetic achievements, which we have hitherto ascribed to deliberate intent. Nor has anyone gained so complete a knowledge of the structure of organs, or of the bundle of nerves which now we call the motor-sensory system, as to explain adequately their functional offices. There are many performances in sub-conscious life, e.g., somnambulism, which throw us into surprise when we waken, and which when we are awake we should not venture to repeat. Animal psychology discloses certain instincts, leading to action, which in sagacity quite excel the voluntary efforts of man. Again, it is averred that the body remains inert and passive, so long as the mind is in no condition to think.

⁴⁰ II, 18, Sch.

⁴¹ Cf. II, 48.

But we answer, the state of body has much to do with the capacity for mental exertion. If the body be sunken in sleep, the mind is torpid; if the body suffer from fatigue or disease, or if the nerve-centres be subject to some particular stimulation, the mind cannot adjust itself to think on a given theme.⁴² These illustrations are adduced to prove, not that body is superior to mind, but that mind and body are one and the same individual, conceived now under the aspect of thought, again under the aspect of extension.⁴³ There is no interaction; the mind cannot change the functioning of bodily organs, nor can the body give to mind the power of thinking; they act with a united impulse.⁴⁴

The relation of mind and body as thus sketched is diametrically opposed to that adopted by Descartes. He held the rules of physics to be inviolable until man is reached. The instincts of sentient creatures are mere automatisms, combinations of physical and chemical elements. Man however is of a different fibre. He possesses thought *and* extension, soul *and* body. Descartes agreed with many less critical thinkers in "conceiving man to be situated in nature as a kingdom within a kingdom." The bearer of intelligence does not passively follow the natural order; he interrupts and often shatters it. To trace the emotions of body to their primary causes was one of the secure triumphs of this philosopher. But he did it only to assure to man an absolute dominion over them. Hence his question was, how the transit from soul to body, from thought to motion could be effected. Preestablished harmony, as afterwards worked out by Leibnitz, would be a poet's dream, not a scientific hypothesis. The single substance of Spinoza obliterated the agelong division, accepted by religion and philosophy as final. A solitary alternative remained to the exponent of Rationalism: man must break into the mechanism of nature, he must master his physical environment. How shall he do it? By translating volition into mechanical action. The pineal gland in the "midst of the brain" furnished the point of contact. All the diverse agitations of animal spirits impinge upon it, and from it receive in turn the impulses which drive them back to the state of equilibrium. Probably in

⁴² III, 2, Sch.

⁴³ II, 21, Sch.

⁴⁴ III, 2.

infancy this connecting gland dealt with a single thought, let us say the most rudimentary reaction; but in time it became associated with the great complex of thought and motion, and at length stood out as the fulcrum by which a man could lift himself above the murk and bondage of circumstance on to the level of independence.⁴⁵

To Spinoza such a transgression of mechanical law was unthinkable. Man is not a privileged being in a world of determined bodies. He may acquire a lordship over nature, if he will; but he can win it not by overriding her precepts, but by obeying everyone to the uttermost. The device proposed by Descartes was a childish invention, unworthy of a mind which had deliberately shivered the idols of Scholastic occultism. For if the uniting gland be equally agitated by impinging passion and volitional decision, the one neutralizing the other, it can yield no assurance that decision will not be checked and perhaps destroyed through the excess of passion. Nor does this theory answer the objection that there is no common denominator between idea and motion, and hence no basis for comparing their relative powers. For how shall I find out the strength of the mental assertion required to lift the arm in the act of felling an opponent, when my instrument of measure is practically unknown to me? When however we understand that the emotions of body follow from the necessary order of nature, that they can be traced back to determinate causes, that they involve no defect in nature, such as is described by the terms *pain* and *vice*, but rather register a little known aspect of her perfection, then we shall not decline to exhibit them in geometrical fashion, as we do lines, planes and solids, believing that by such a survey we shall be driven to oppose and conquer the restraints which have been forced upon us.⁴⁶

III

Having accepted the thesis that man shares the causal relations of mechanism, we proceed to inquire how they find expression in his emotional life. His body, as we saw, comes into

⁴⁵ V, Pref.

⁴⁶ III, Pref.

being wholly without his connivance. Inasmuch as mutually destructive elements cannot operate within the same body, we must attribute to man as to other individuals the endeavor to preserve his own existence. This endeavor can be nothing else than the essence or constitutive nature with which he makes his entrance into the world.⁴⁷ Hence the Conatus is a determined quantum, an appetite governed solely by the laws of chemical reaction. It is a something which we cannot change. We cannot, for example, do injury to ourselves with a view to ultimate benefit. To hate an object, and sustain thereby a distinct loss of emotional vigor, expecting to attain later a degree of mental "perfection" hitherto unknown, is a type of sacrifice utterly repugnant to natural law.⁴⁸ Moreover, the same impulse, even when associated with consciousness and called *desire*, receives not a shred more of self-initiating power than it formerly had. Desire is not an outreaching for a benison which we would make our own. We do not desire a thing because it is good; a thing is good because we desire it; that is, because the organic function responds most readily to the stimulus. Now the realisation of a good, or more strictly, the functioning of desire, brings with it an increase of the body's powers and a corresponding increase of the mind's capacity. The movement is purely reflexive; it springs from the properties of our nature. We could not be men if we did not pursue a conduct like this. Thus, the emotions of love and hate are not careful discriminations on the part of an agent, as many moralists contend. They are mental registrations of physical facts. The forces of body are enlarged or diminished, and the mind cultivates or shrinks from a conception of the same.⁴⁹ Hatred and envy do not in the first instance imply deliberate intent. They are impulses which record an automatic revolt against any interference with a man's comfort, or his right to live. Parents have often fed the fires of such emotion by inciting their children to virtue, precisely for the sake of eclipsing the prestige of a neighbor's family or neutralizing their efforts. But all the training born of ambition would have been fruitless and dead except for the tendency already implanted in

⁴⁷ III, 7.

⁴⁸ III, 44, Sch.

⁴⁹ III, 13, C.

the youthful nature.⁵⁰ Whatever be the emotion that struggles for utterance, we may be sure that it forges one new fetter upon hands already heavily loaded with the tokens of human enslavement.

We have nothing to do with the rise of emotion; we have as little to do with its development. This consideration accounts for the wide variation of types in a given society, a measurable difference here, an extraordinary contrast there. Whence comes such diversity? The answer is: Elemental passions depend altogether on the way a body receives its modifications through the medium of external forces.⁵¹ That our emotional nature is stirred to activity in this way only, is the common testimony of observers.⁵² Thus, the child is constrained to laugh or cry when similar phenomena are found in the behavior of its attendants,⁵³ an imitative reaction which in later life develops into a determinate attempt to emulate the word, look or dress of one whom we love.⁵⁴ Again, the tremor of lip and the pallor of brow are traceable directly to a nervous shock administered by some foreign body of higher potency than ours. These are emotional experiences which every man involuntarily repeats; pieces of "fossilized intelligence" (Lamarck), not drafts on the mind, as the reservoir of thought.⁵⁵ Another group of emotions distinguish one agent from another. These admit of a diversity of intellectual judgments; and yet these, too, are based upon the empirical fact that every man tends to react to given conditions in certain well defined ways. Thus, courage and fear are first of all physical phenomena; a man does not make himself brave or timid; he is that, by the tendency of his nature. More than that; no man can form an opinion on a particular act involving hardihood, without revealing at the same time his own emotional synthesis. "I shall call a man intrepid when he makes light of an evil which I am disposed to fear; and if in addition I consider the fact that his desire of injuring his enemy and benefiting his friend is not restrained through fear of danger, I shall call him audacious." The value of my judgment depends on

⁵⁰ III, 55, Sch.

⁵² III, 13, Sch.

⁵⁴ III, 27.

⁵¹ III, 56.

⁵³ III, 32, Sch.

⁵⁵ III, 59, Sch.

my personal idea of courage, and that can be appraised only in terms of the physical power which I myself feel in face of evils.⁵⁶

Individual peculiarities, then, instead of guaranteeing independence, serve only to prove how deeply entrenched in private experience are the rigorous laws of organic life. We are subject to an external constraint which we can neither throw off nor reduce. We are forced to be whatever our sensory reactions make us; and they in turn are shaped by the stimulating bodies about them. We are a prey to passion. For, in last analysis, drunkenness and avarice are not merely changes in a particular body. The words imply correlatives. If a man be drunken, it is because he has been lured by the cup and has imbibed its contents. If a man is avaricious, it is because he has conceived the possibilities wrapped up in the possession of gold. "They proclaim," says Spinoza, "the nature of each affection through the objects to which they sustain the most intimate (i.e. causal) relation."⁵⁷ In general, sympathy and antipathy, words introduced by certain authors to indicate an occult property in things, really describe our emotional life; we are victims of passivity, whether for good or for ill. Nature has driven her thongs into man's flesh and heart.⁵⁸

The servitude of man is further strengthened by his vacillation in face of conflicting emotions.⁵⁹ The sensory nerves cannot always communicate the same steady vitalizing power; there must be alternations of uplift and depression. This situation, so familiar in purely organic experience, stands typical of the entire emotional career of man. Consider for example the person whose temperament is antithetical to our own, who yet strongly resembles in face and behavior a third person, counted among our dearest friends. In our mind two distinct and contradictory emotions are aroused, attraction and repulsion, love and hate. Two attitudes strive for ascendancy, and we are unable by untrammelled choice to adopt either.⁶⁰ The situation

⁵⁶ III, 51, Sch.

⁵⁷ III, 56, Sch.

⁵⁸ III, 15, Sch.

⁵⁹ III, 41, C.

⁶⁰ III, 17.

finds a parallel in the sphere of imagination. The mind is simultaneously affected by two images, because two several impressions concur in the sensory system. When one image returns the other is automatically called up. If now the first image be associated on another occasion with a third object, its fresh appearance will superinduce a conflict of expectations: will Y or Z follow X? The percipient is incapable of rendering a decision.⁶¹ In the sphere of emotion the fluctuation arises not from the mere concurrence of sensations, but because the causes operate differently in producing the effects. In the case just cited, hatred is the result of a direct clash of antagonistic natures, while the feeling of love is engendered by the presence of another cause. Generally, however, both emotions may be incited by the same cause, by virtue of the extraordinary diversity of our sensory reactions. Furthermore, in the last analysis, contradictory desires will be found to be variations of the same emotion, as *e.g.*, avarice and luxury of self-love; the one expressing greediness for personal gain, the other lavish expenditure for personal gratification.⁶²

IV

Such is the situation which meets every man, even the most advanced and experienced. What will be the outcome? What shall determine the issue? The man himself by "decree of mind" cannot settle the case once for all. That is out of the question. The settlement takes place by a change in tone of one or both of the contrary passions.⁶³ A new "state of mind" then exists. Thus, when hunger has been appeased by food, the digestive organs are no longer in the same condition of susceptibility. What appealed strongly before, now palls on the taste. We could not if we tried excite the sharp appetite which a moment ago craved for satisfaction.⁶⁴ But such a quick adjustment is not always to be expected. There are certain conditions which nature imposes, and which she insists should be met. The whim or alleged volition of the agent has no part in effecting the

⁶¹ II, 44, Sch.

⁶² IV, Def. v.

⁶³ V, 1.

⁶⁴ III, 59, Sch.

change. Emotions with the stimulating cause present exceed in strength emotions whose cause has disappeared. Emotions respecting future objects are fainter in proportion to the remoteness of attainment. Emotions conceived to be necessary make a far deeper impression on the mind than those which are contingent on unknown circumstances.⁶⁵ An intelligent grasp of the principles of good and evil cannot of itself overcome the effect of impulsive desire. We may be thoroughly convinced of the advisability of a certain course, we may have carefully estimated its ethical advantages, we may have worked up a genuine enthusiasm for its virtuous possibilities; but when a sudden impulse, yielding immediate results, fastens upon us, all the fervor of intention expires like a dying flame, and we are left with the dead ashes of a natural passion.⁶⁶ Indeed, it is true to say that the violence of the conflict exhausts a man's power of activity, and confirms the word of Sacred Writ: "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." Thus our boasted freedom turns out to be a hidden chain, binding us with links of steel back to the tyranny of unrationalized appetite.⁶⁷ Appetite, sensation, stimulus, fetters of sense, signs of bondage, from these we shall struggle in vain to win release.

Having this convincing array of facts before us, we wonder how men will venture to affirm their independence. The paradox arrests attention. It is not a sporadic challenge, here and there. It is the judgment of many dispassionate observers. How can we dispel the illusion? We might compare man to a flying stone, which has been set in motion by an external force. If it becomes conscious during transit, it would regard itself as free in determining its direction and would think of the impulse which carries it along as the product of its own action.⁶⁸ This parable suggests two things; first, a definition of the will, and next a discovery of the actual cause of mental exertion. The will is not, as Cartesians hold, a separate faculty, by which a man executes his ideas. It is the same as intellect, composed of conscious units, each one of which answers to a particular change in the

⁶⁵ IV, 9, 10, 11.

⁶⁶ IV, 16.

⁶⁷ IV, 17, Sch.

⁶⁸ Epis. 62.

organic structure. If a mind cannot perceive a thing, it cannot will it. That which we call will is the sum of volitions, nothing more.⁶⁹ Yet it is a convenient term under which to group determinate acts, in the same way that we classify certain individuals under the term *man*, or abstract a common quality, *lapidity*, from several particular *stones*. Now the common property in volitions, the residual fact in all exertions of mind, is consciousness; it is this fact which awards to us a constructive part in the making of conduct. For instance, the impulses of childhood, desire for food, flashes of temper, instinct to run from danger, the maudlin behavior of an intoxicated man, the delirium of the fevered patient, the inconsequential loquacity of gossiping women, are thought by their subjects to be free decisions of will, just because they are conscious of a change in sensation. As a matter of fact, such activities express no freedom whatsoever; they register only the functioning of physical appetites. Trace the volition to its source and we see how helpless the agent is to hew his own way. The man who is caught in the cross-currents of incompatible impulses yields to uncertainty and doubt and cannot conceive a moral policy steady enough to steer him to safety. The man with no commanding emotion, no love, no hate, no ambition, no honor,—an anemic and undefined complex of sensations,—will be the buffet of circumstances, a prey to every inconsiderable fancy that meets his eye. Each man is conscious of his subjective states; he cannot make a single one of them permanent by a free decision of mind.⁷⁰

Hence, volition as an originaive power is a delusion. As well hold that we can by act of will recover to conscious thought the name or fact which has dropped into the abysm of forgetfulness—as well maintain that the thrilling events of the dreamworld are acts of deliberate intent, as suppose that the most refined hypothesis of the philosopher is palpitant with any other energy than that which courses through the arteries of nature. The laws of thought are the same as the laws of matter; they belong to the same substance.⁷¹ To suspend judgment is to disrupt the order of ideas, an impossible procedure. Judgment cannot be

⁶⁹ II, 49. C.

⁷⁰ III, 2, Sch.

⁷¹ II, 36.

suspended, for the attempt to do so is itself a judgment, and the sequence of thought is inviolably preserved. Nor can a man exercise the power of contrary choice, that is, decide upon a thing in contravention of all prior motives; for such an act would have no constitutive cause, would be a spar cast upon an uncharted sea, with its origin a mysterious blank.⁷² "Wherefore," says the author, "these decisions of mind arise in consciousness by the same necessity as the images of things which exist in the phenomenal world. Hence, those who believe that they speak, or keep silent, or perform any action by the free election of mind, do but dream with their eyes open."⁷³

By this definition of will, too, we understand how error takes hold upon the mind of man. For error is not a real fact, but a privation of knowledge. Thus, we conceive the sun to be about two hundred feet from the surface of the earth. If we decline to test our sensuous experience by the principles of scientific inquiry, then, it may be said, we acquiesce in what is false. For knowledge unverified by true standards cannot be certain; we may have no doubts as to its correctness; but we can never affirm its universal validity. In the case mentioned, another man might estimate the distance to be three hundred feet, because the rays of the sun were less potent to his senses. But when knowledge is sure, when we have ascertained by exact computation the relation of the sun to its planets, then error is eliminated; and private acceptance of the fact counts for nothing in establishing its validity.⁷⁴ The lesson which this experience teaches is that much of man's vaunted knowledge is derived from the falsifying impressions of the body. We are driven into ignorance by the involuntary reactions of sense-organs. Intellectual judgments as well as reflex actions proclaim the depth of our captivity.

⁷² II, 49, Sch.

⁷³ III, 2, Sch.

⁷⁴ II, 49, Sch.

CHAPTER II

PURPOSE THE MARK OF FREEDOM

The case is now closed, and a unanimous verdict is rendered on the basis of convincing testimony. Man is the bondman of nature. He dwells in a world whose every atom is immersed in an inflexible causal series. His ideas are governed in origin and development by a necessary coördination of mind. His emotions are aroused, shaped and swayed by rigid contact with external bodies. The hypothesis that he can change his behavior or environment at will is a fatuous mistake, due to ignorance. Yet in face of such cumulative evidence confirming the enslavement of man, Spinoza hears thrilling through his being the note of freedom. He beholds his body weighted with the chains of matter; but he is not satisfied. His soul is struggling with a mighty hope. Can it be released? Can the fact of servitude so rigorously enforced be offset by another fact, which reflects the rule of freedom? This is the problem. He is unhesitating in its solution. Man is in part free, in part not free. To demonstrate man's right to freedom is the business of the *Ethics*. Is the proof conclusive? Various opinions have been handed down. We select two historic criticisms, one denying freedom utterly, the other granting a limited kind to human nature, as he defines it.

Jacobi denies that rational freedom can be found in Spinoza's treatment of man.¹ The structure of the self, he avers, is strictly mechanical; its one and only duty being to preserve the power of existence. The desire stirring in man is typical; it knows no genus, species or sex. Yet it is individualized in the conscious self, and being endowed with intelligence appears to act by volitional intent. It is, however, subject to exact determination by physical causes, both in its organic and ideational

¹ Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza. Werke; 4. Band, erste Abt.; S. 17, u. fg. Leipzig. 1819.

forms. The conatus alone explains the personal feeling which organizes reflective thought and irrational impulses into a coherent whole. Hence the genius of Newton can be reduced to the terms of organic reaction. The practical life of man is in like manner shaped by its control. If constituent desires conflict, they will eventually be harmonized by the action of the same basic endeavor. The result will be a more perfect type of character, that is, one more highly developed; for there is nothing intrinsically bad in nature. Being necessary, nature must be the best. So what man secures for himself must be the best. His very assumption of freedom is proof of his integration into the common order of mechanism, and springs from a subjective interest in his own condition; just as we might watch a valuable plant unfolding, knowing that we could assist it only by giving its chemical formulas the best field in which to work out their applications. Freedom like this is nil.

One special point in the doctrine is cordially condemned, *viz.*, the exclusion of Liberty of Indifference, or the power of contrary choice. There are three possible attitudes towards moral ability: physical necessity, the operation of the machine; moral necessity, the choice of the best; unrestrained freedom of the will. The first only is agreeable with Spinoza's premises. The second resolves itself into the first; the third is explicitly denied. Will is a succession of mental acts, each one of which is duly caused by antecedent conditions. It cannot therefore exercise the power of choosing a course when different paths are open. In fact, the mind is confronted with an alternative. The privilege of rejecting every proposed motive and pursuing an independent course, is excluded by the nature of man. The only power possible in human life is the play of appetite, which is another aspect of mechanical force, and the freedom felt in the exertion of power, instead of being self-originated, is simply the obverse of necessity.

Another and quite different judgment is pronounced by a commentator like Kuno Fischer.² Freedom, he says, as defined by Spinoza is a real experience; but freedom in such a system

² Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, Bd. II, S. 415 u.s.f.

has nothing to do with the framing of conduct. It is not an ethical fact; it is a predicate of intelligence. To be free we must endeavor to fashion clear and distinct ideas of all emotions; and since ideas are the organ of mind, we can realize freedom only in knowledge. Now we know first of all our own body and the physical objects which touch it. But we only know that they exist; we cannot understand by organic reactions the infinitude of their parts and relations. The same thing is true of the mind; the single image, or the sum-total of consciousness, is very imperfectly apprehended. But we are prone to accept part-knowledge as authoritative; hence we frame misleading concepts, like freedom, purpose, and generic notions. We can make our ideas clear and our knowledge adequate by tracing each image, each reaction, to its cause. By this method we perceive the relation of each object to the "common order of nature" and find that ideas and things are one and the same, expressing eternal substance under different attributes. The result will be that men are no longer deceived by the representations of sense. Reason has universalized the individual, and eventually intuitive knowledge will open up the essence of all things, that is to say, the being of God.

At this point the ethical implications of the system of knowledge begin to emerge. Emotion is the key to character. It is at first entirely passive, an organic fact. But it may become active by being idealized, that is, by being understood in its relation to the common order. Desire and volition belong to the sphere of reaction; they are marks of subjection until we find their cause, stamp them with reason, and lift them to a place of supremacy in mental experience. Clear ideas, following necessarily from our nature, constitute virtue and command the assent of will. They alone give freedom, for they alone register our growing independence of desires that are fed by sensuous experience. Hence, we must sharpen in thought the distinction between good and evil, falsity and truth. Moral perfection being the highest emotion is won by adequate knowledge. Men are deceived now; they fancy themselves free; they are in the bitterest bondage. Let them perceive the order of nature and

come into conceptual relations with the world-laws. Then the claims of sense are silenced, and reason, pointing to virtue, guides their hesitating steps to perfect knowledge. The spirit of this imperative, not its form, says Fischer, is communicated by Spinoza's theory. For ethics, as taught by him, is not a categorical command, but a mathematical demonstration. It does not issue precepts, it conceives the laws of life. Hence, knowledge cannot be defined as a purpose, but as the analysis of man's essential nature. Hence, too, the attainment of knowledge will be the realization of his perfect freedom.³

The first of these interpretations places Spinoza in an unenviable light before the eyes of history. He stands no longer as a figure to the rejected but as a dreamer so grossly deceived as to be an object of pity. At one moment he maintains with convincing detail the thesis: Man is not free; the next, he announces a program whose key note is: Man ought to be and is free. Does he mean by freedom the same thing in each case? If he does, the judgment of Jacobi is true; and the book which so many eager spirits have fed upon becomes a tissue of contradictions. If he does not, then we ask, What are the two senses in which we may use the word, one of which may be denied, the other asserted with perfect consistency? That man is free, as some fondly fancy, to change the course of nature or disregard her laws,—this is the sense which Spinoza vehemently denies. Man in this respect is not free. Is he also in some respect free?

The second interpretation finds his freedom in the winning of clear ideas. The reflective part of man is free, the part by which he rises to the contemplation of the whole of nature. But the part which is free proves on this view to be so very small as well nigh to elude our quest, and so difficult to develop that it exerts no influence in the life of ordinary men, but belongs if to any one to the intellectual saint. On the other hand the freedom which Spinoza means is not prohibitive in its terms. It is embodied in every, even the simplest purposeful act, and is exercised by man at every moment of his life. Every act is in

³ *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*. Band II, S. 540.

part free, in part not free. It is not free, insofar as it is conceived as the outcome of the action of physico-chemical forces. It is free, when it can be clearly understood through the properties of man's nature.⁴ We may arrange such acts in a series in which the degree of freedom increases and which has for its limit the fascinating but baffling concept of an absolutely free soul.⁵ Thus the development of human life includes, first, the recognition of primary or typical impulses, next the weaving of these into a systematic whole called character, and finally the conceiving of a Self which interprets its purpose and unity by the purpose and unity of the world. Our present duty is to ascertain how the purposes belonging to the type *man* afford a basis for freedom.

I

We begin by pointing out that the order of nature is not fully explained by the category of mechanism. That category answers the question, *how* a thing is done. If we ask *how* a body performs the actions which we assign to it, we must examine its structure, its material properties, the kind of force at work, molecular attraction, elasticity, chemical reaction and the like. The examination will show that one element depends upon another by rigid necessity; that *this* result could never have been obtained apart from *that* combination of conditions.⁶ Thus, to take a simple example, the seizure and assimilation of food is a serial relating of cause to effect. Every movement which grasps the prey and conveys it to the body can be estimated in terms of physical force. The digestive apparatus which is set going as soon as food is at hand, is a group of organs, extremely intricately appointed in some species, whose every reaction records a definite amount of power in the stimulus. So too, there are fixed formulas, to which may be reduced all the chemical fluids which enter into the activity of the organ. Hence it is possible to calculate precisely how much work is done in changing an organism from the state of hunger to the satisfaction of an appeased appetite.⁷

⁴ III, Def. ii.

⁵ II, Def. vii.

⁶ I, 28.

⁷ Cf. III, 59, Sch.

But our account so far has paid no heed to certain facts which do not answer the question, *How*. They are as essentially connected with the frame of the world as the others and must be duly explained if we are to leave no problem standing. These facts invite us to determine *why* a thing is done, to what end a given act tends. They do not ask how a thing is constructed, or under what laws or by what means it has attained its position. To set out the several structural stages by which the pinch of hunger is subdued, may be sufficient for the demands of physiology. The student of vital phenomena, however, believes his work only half done. *Why* the cells and tissues combine to form an organ which reacts to definite stimuli, is the problem before him. Mechanism does not yield an answer. It cannot yield any. The problem is not of structure, but of function. The same materials are under review, but they are differently appraised. Heretofore we asked how they operated; now we ask what they do. It is the idea, the *mind*, the conceptual being of a thing (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι), which is expressed in the new definition.⁸ On the level of intelligence, where man fashions his conduct to suit his needs, we have no hesitation in calling the idea teleological.⁹ Closer reflection will convince us that every act, whether of impulse or reflection, has its inherent purpose. We may carry the test further and hold that the frame of the world bears the marks of purposive coordination, not in the sense that a governing Mind has conceived an end to which all nature is inexorably driven,¹⁰ but in the sense that the several parts into which it is critically broken up cannot be understood save as contributing to the meaning of the whole.¹¹

Everything, then, possesses an idea or "soul," and between idea and object, that is, between purpose and structural arrangement, there is a point-to-point correspondence.¹² To rank the category of teleology side by side and of equal authority with that of mechanism, is to offer an exhaustive explanation of all facts in the field of nature. Brute force is not the only vehicle of causality. It is found as a cause in planet and organism, in

⁸ II, 7, Sch.

⁹ IV, 24.

¹⁰ I, App.

¹¹ Cf. I, 15, Sch.

¹² II, 7, 13, Sch.

the speck of dust and the undeveloped germ. It is *allgueltig*, but it is not *alleinguelteig*.¹³ The force of a thing's essence, the purpose of its existence, exercises a causation just as valid and just as universal.¹⁴ But in the organic world the teleological principle can be more readily identified than among purely physical forces. Life, the peculiar mark of the organism, can not be seen, felt or weighed, and yet no organic body can be defined without it. Life is the *idea* of the thing called, say, man; himself certainly a compound of gases, liquids and solids,¹⁵ a cluster of cells, that never deviate in action from the prescribed rules of chemistry; yet at the same time a "force" which insists on viewing the structure as a whole. To say that an organism *lives*, is to read its constituents from the standpoint of their purpose. Since life belongs by definition to it, we are bound to regard purpose as a cause evincing the same efficacy that we find in the mechanical order.¹⁶

But it may be alleged that teleology is a concept of the observing mind and has no real place in the course of nature; that it is an epiphenomenon, imposed by us on familiar facts, but incapable of exerting any influence on their adjustment. We study now the conscious body, for man, our particular subject, finds his purlieu here. If the objection implies that to be effective teleology must be a new material force ushered in to counteract mechanical forces already in operation, we grant it at once. Teleology has no power to frustrate the movements of mechanism. Nor, conversely, can physical laws interfere with the true application of purpose. They are different aspects of the same phenomena, viewed, as Spinoza says, now under the attribute of thought, and again under the attribute of extension.¹⁷ If the objector conceives that teleology is designed to throw new light on the workings of mechanism, he misconstrues the doctrine. Purpose is not brought in to piece out an explanation which mechanical formulas cannot complete. It deals with factors in organic life which mechanism does not contemplate. Mechan-

¹³ Cossman. Die Elemente der empirischen Teleologie.

¹⁴ II, 45, Sch.

¹⁵ III, 57, Sch.

¹⁶ II, Post. ii.

¹⁷ III, 2, Sch.

ism, we say, considers the attachment of one term to its immediate antecedent. Teleology asks how the term or terms are related to the whole; that is to say, how they conspire to effect an end. Parts and whole, means and end are at base statements of the same thing. Thus, parts in a whole, when that whole is organic, cannot be merely quantities added together. Adding the number of organs and the weight of cellular tissues would never produce a total organism. Even when we reckon up the mechanical units of work which the combined parts could do, we are no nearer the goal. To assess the value of the parts, we must find what is common between them and the whole. Spinoza calls this conceiving an object adequately.¹⁸ This can only mean that the action of the part is conditioned on the action of the organic whole. The particular act of an organ is not like the flight of a stone, which being projected by the hand comes to earth again and sustains no further connection with the force that gave the impulse. The organic act is inevitably construed in terms of the structure of the body in which it occurs. When the arm is raised and the fist clenched, and a violent expulsion of physical force made through the sensori-motor system, we construe the movement as perfectly harmonious with the frame and power of the body.¹⁹ The parts have combined into a unity. They possess the common elements binding them to the organism. The same effect may be demonstrated by negative proof. For suppose a certain reaction, *e.g.*, for drink, were greatly heightened and threatened to become the controlling impulse in conduct. Its ascendancy would disturb the due proportion of power as between part and whole, and in damaging the whole would react upon itself to its own disadvantage,—an impossible condition, as we shall see.²⁰

But the connection of part and whole goes even deeper than this. It is possible to conceive of a machine so subtly contrived and put together that its parts would contribute infallibly to the working of the whole. Such parts, successful as they are when together in realizing the purpose of the mechanism, are by themselves colorless bits. They do not body forth the composite

¹⁸ II, 38.

¹⁹ IV, 59, Sch.

²⁰ IV, 60.

meaning of the whole. Organic interaction is different. Every organ not only has properties in common with the organism; it is so constructed that we can find the motives of the body's action in the action of a part.²¹ Thus, the sex-impulse is a mirror of the lust for life. For not only does it serve as the medium for the preservation of species; its exercise duly restrained inures also to the health of the organism, and in the case of man to his ethical uplift.²² The same is true of every other organic reaction. Hence we have an infinitely varied and complex network of impulses, each one participating in the nature of the organism, or as Spinoza puts it, every desire being derived from the primary appetite which affirms the existence of the individual.²³

The relation of means and end may be treated in the same way. An organ acts toward a defined end. Its function is determined by the result to be achieved. Hence, an organic act must be sharply distinguished from one simply mechanical. We must interpret it in terms of its effect, not of its cause. The most rudimentary impulse, *viz.*, for food, stands over against the end subserved, the preservation of the body. Hunger and life are correlated facts; they too go hand in hand. But how can an effect, as yet unaccomplished, mould the character of the cause? How can a future goal determine a present course of action? Have we not committed the fallacy of *hysteron proteron*, the effect before the cause, as the older teleology persistently did?²⁴ Are we not deliberately making volition an instrument for re-arranging the members of the mechanical series? We answer, It is precisely this last step that we have not taken, and cannot take. Every analysis that makes purpose a term in efficient causation is mistaken. The end we mean is not dramatically conceived as an object of quest; it is implied in the nature of the organism. There is a "good" which every impulse realizes, must realize potentially, if not in concrete effect; it is bound up with the processes of the body's life.²⁵ The tendency involved in a given impulse may or may not arrive at its goal. In many

²¹ II, 16.²² IV, 68, Sch.; *cf. infra*, pg. 116-7.²³ III, 11, Sch.²⁴ I, App.²⁵ III, 9, Sch.

cases the attempt at functioning is abortive. Means are not at hand of sufficient strength or precise quality to stimulate reaction. The "end" is never reached.²⁶ But such a lapse does not destroy the values of the function. They remain, in effect, persistent elements in organic experience. Torn tissue and deteriorated organ do not proclaim the failure of the teleological scheme; they cut still more clearly the issue between it and mechanism. For if a cleft appear in the physical series, we must either revise the data upon which induction was based, or confess that we have thus far missed the secrets of mechanical law.²⁷ On the other hand purpose, in order to support its character, does not need to reach an objective goal.

Purpose, then, evinces a tendency in which the nature of the end is mirrored. Spinoza adopts for his central term a word which signalizes this fact. He calls the individual a *Conatus*, an endeavor, a complex of related impulses which unite in a common end.²⁸ The business of man is to strive with all his powers to realize his appointed end as fully as possible; that is to say, develop to the best of his ability his particular organic impulses. Take the instinct of gregariousness, held in common with many members of lower species. Can we rightly call it a propension of matured humanity? Suspicion, hatred, warfare argue strongly for the opposite conclusion. Hence, satirists have praised the life of pastoral simplicity, or compared men to beasts, to the obvious disparagement of the former. But the facts of experience do not bear out the stricture. Whatever be the origin of the coalescing instinct,—desire for warmth, ties of blood, protection to life and limb, a crude distribution of economic labors,—it is true that human beings cannot live permanently apart without serious injury. Men need the clash and friction, the sympathy and help of their kind, both for individual growth and racial progress.²⁹ The instinct which works its way into the most refined type of government is, at the start, a natural impulse seeking outlet. It is a tendency that must be interpreted by reference to the end in view. Thus, it can never

²⁶ IV, 3.

²⁸ III, 7.

²⁷ I, 29.

²⁹ IV, 35, Sch.

be satisfied by contact with inarticulate animals. They belong to one order of reality, man to another. They may evince a kind of affection and elicit from us a genuine feeling of regard.³⁰ But tendencies move only on horizontal lines. They are gauged by the nature of the organism in which they operate, such organism being coincident with the end proposed. We are therefore brought back to the first principle of organic character, *viz.*, that the part will inevitably reflect the properties of the whole, and vice versa.³¹ But we get an advance in thought from a static to a dynamic point of view. We see now the continuous unfolding of the individual's powers. The conation, the push, the strong aggressive principle of organization in man, animal and plant, sharpens the division between facts which show purpose and facts which express the mechanical ideal. Purpose as a cause is conditioned in result by its own impulsive type.

The world, then, to which man is introduced is two-faced. It looks out upon a scene throbbing with the activity of force. Man is under constraint. He is bound hand and foot to the wheel of law. His every act bespeaks the uniformity of nature, from whose dominion he cannot withdraw. The same world presents another view, not to contradict but to expound the first. Here man is free. He has not put off the garments of serfdom; he has transfigured them with a new meaning. Cells and tissues and physical reactions are not the whole tale of his life. They could be of no value to him, could not constitute him a man, apart from an organizing principle. Chemical formulas do not include it; it is teleological. So conspicuous a fact we may not venture to neglect. Hence, we ask, How does purpose moving in conation insure freedom? Or rather, if purpose be the mark of freedom, what kind of freedom shall we get? It cannot be the kind of freedom which Jacobi invokes. That springs full-orbed from an unpurposed mind, a kind of mental vacuum. Freedom, says Spinoza, is generated from within.³² Man, we know, is not free on the plane of sense-perception. He responds to stimulus, whether he will or no. But on the other hand can the unguided exertion of will yield freedom? Deeper still, can

³⁰ IV, 37, Sch.

³¹ II, 38,

³² II, 29, Sch.

the mind ever give birth to thought without sufficient cause? Thinkers like Fichte have accepted a *formal* freedom,³³ which selects its point of departure. But on examination it turns out to be nothing but an ideal, standing at the end of a dialectic indefinitely continued. Real freedom has its direction determined and moves within bounds; like the rushing river, whose definition prescribes a channel beyond whose limits it may not pass; like the triangle, whose interior angles must be equal to two right angles or it ceases to be triangular.³⁴ Hence, we are guilty of error if we set "necessary" and "free" over against one another. They are not contrary terms. For if they were, God would know himself freely, but not by necessity,—which would drive the wedge of chance into the divine nature. *Pari passu*, if a man wills to live and love, he acts by unpremeditated thrust,—a sort of spontaneous combustion of soul. The will is a property of the understanding, subject at all times to its laws. Freedom is not unleashed volition; freedom is determined.³⁵

But determined by what? What is the thing which requires the interior angles to make a particular equation? What fact of body submits its several qualities to a searching test, with a view to ascertaining their relations?³⁶ We answer, The *nature* of the individual determines the field of freedom. An organism can do just that for which it is fitted by the structure and coherence of its parts, and nothing more. Its grade of freedom corresponds to the type of purpose involved. To seek the kind of action belonging to an insect in the body of a horse is palpably absurd.³⁷ To interpret the mind of man by the data of animal psychology is to misjudge the office of purpose and hopelessly confuse our ideas of freedom. To attribute to vegetable life the functions which only the highly intellectualized nature of man can exercise shows gross ignorance of the idea of cause.³⁸ Yet while this is true, it is not the whole truth. There are certain type-purposes common to all branches of the organic kingdom. Man is heir to these, and so are the oak, the lily, and the

³³ Wissenschaftslehre, 1801. 2. Teil, sect. 31.

³⁴ Cf. II, 49, Demonstration (=Dem.)

³⁵ Epis. 56.

³⁶ II, 29, Sch.

³⁷ IV, Pref.

³⁸ I, 8, Sch. ii.

blade of grass. There are other conations which find a place only in conscious life. Man shares his treasures here with the amoeba, the insect and the dog.³⁹ There are still other purposes which are found in the type man, and these determine the grade of freedom peculiar to reason. But freedom does not wait for its sceptre until the highest grade is reached. It follows the line of purpose. For wherever purpose appears, at that point appears too the "power to begin by itself."⁴⁰ Thus, given the same conditions in either case, the reaction is set up when life is present; when life is extinct there is no reaction. Hence we conclude that freedom is not a predicate of reflective mind alone; but may be applied also to the simplest impulse of organic life;—which means that every emotion in the sphere of human conduct, whether elementary or refined, is ultimately a fit subject of ethical valuation.⁴¹

II

What are the type-purposes which man has in common with all organized beings? To answer this question we must examine the field in which they are at work. Confining ourselves to the grade of consciousness, we discern in each body a certain equipment which it has had no part in producing.⁴² This individual man, brought into existence by natural causes,⁴³ is a complex of appetites, each one being determined to its own activity by a calculable modification of its organ.⁴⁴ Life then is impulsive in the sense not only that it is acted upon, but that it acts. The organism is the seat of power.⁴⁵ But power is not merely a complex of mechanical forces moving as we conceive them to move in, e.g., an electric charge. Power here is coupled with the idea of purpose, an end to be pushed towards. Hence, physical force emerging in bodily reaction is appetite or purpose at work. By a phenomenon which organization alone exhibits, beginning and end are joined. "That for the sake of which we do anything is desire."⁴⁶ If now the power of an organism be

³⁹ III, 28.

⁴⁰ III, 57, Sch.

⁴¹ III, Def. Emot. i.

⁴² Kant, Kritik der Urtheilskraft, § 65.

⁴³ III, 12.

⁴⁴ IV, App. xxx.

⁴⁵ I, 17, Sch.

⁴⁶ IV, Def. vii.

appetite, it must be subject to variations in intensity, since every new approach to an object changes the attitude of the agent and sets up new reactions. The change in attitude is a readjustment of the relations of motion and rest within the body,⁴⁷ that is to say, in the sensori-motor system. It follows from the satisfaction of a definite appetite.⁴⁸ Thus, in the example already cited, hunger is the impulse, and food the means for gratifying it. When food has entered the body and been assimilated, instantly an agreeable feeling is superinduced, and the body affirms a new state of perfection.⁴⁹ When the emotion is not periodic, but a steady experience, we call it love; and the wish accompanying it is not, as some think, a deliberate aim conceived in the mind, but the contentment incident to the reaching of its end.⁵⁰ When we rise to the consideration of psychic states, we may compare the impressions made by images of things present and things past or future, and weigh their respective pleasures,—being warned, however, that memory is apt to bring contrary images in its train, disturbing and perhaps paining the mind.⁵¹ These are samples of the increasing degree of gratification, parallel to the kind of purpose at work. The greater the scope of gratification, the greater the capacity for freedom.

Impulse defines the nature of life and blocks out its stadium. But what is its content? Is it a single, comprehensive, sovereign impulse, a universal type-purpose, or is it broken into constitutive bits? "Everything," says Spinoza, "insofar as it is in itself endeavors to persevere in its own being."⁵² This is the first and fundamental truth: there is nothing prior to it.⁵³ The mechanical analogue of this truth lies in the fact that two forces, contrary to one another, e.g., fire and water, cannot coexist in the same body;⁵⁴ the teleological, lies in the definition of organism, which includes a tendency at least ideally to reach the end.⁵⁵ The actual lasting-time of the body cannot affect the application of the law. Just so soon as an infant draws its first breath, it has

⁴⁷ II, Lem. ii.⁴⁸ III, 11, Sch.⁴⁹ III, 59, Sch.⁵⁰ III, Def. Emot. vi.⁵¹ III, 18, Sch. i.⁵² III, 6.⁵³ IV, 22, C.⁵⁴ III, 5.⁵⁵ III, 7.

affirmed the will to live. If we adopted the point of view of Schopenhauer, we might say that finite things, insofar as they express universal reality, cannot be destroyed.⁵⁶ Will, impulse, purpose are permanently real. Their embodiment in person or thing is subject to decay. Spinoza accepts the eternity of type-character, or essence,—“so careful of the type”; but type-character can no more be defeated or obscured, when residing in the individual, than when thought of as a logical principle. Thus, we cannot and will not lift a finger to compass our own death. The regimen laid upon us by entrance into the sphere of purpose forbids it. When a man takes his life, we argue that constraint was put upon him,—physical force, moral obligation as when Seneca died at the emperor’s command, or mental rupture. He could not by voluntary consent defy and degrade the dominant type-impulse of human nature.⁵⁷ It is here that Spinoza parts company with Schopenhauer. The will to live cannot be disannulled, even in face of its crumbling tenements. For after all the only experience we have with the universal precept is in the body, our own individuality. To give up that for absorption in the world-will is unreal and impractical, and offers no room for the progressive apprehension of freedom. The man who knows himself to be free guides his course by the familiar maxim that discretion is the better part of valor.⁵⁸

That the primary impulse holds the key to the meaning of an organism, is proved by the fact of its untimed duration. “The endeavor wherewith a thing endeavors to persevere in its being, involves not a definite but an indefinite time.”⁵⁹ Life has no date. In this respect it differs from a term in the mechanical series. The swing of a celestial body about its orbit can be calculated to the fraction of a second; but who has ever reckoned with such precision the life-span of a man? “If we knew all the terms in the series, we could predict to the moment the event of death.” The argument from ignorance is worth just what it says, and no more. It is here that the type-purpose yields a clear

⁵⁶ I, 21.

⁵⁷ IV, 20, Sch.

⁵⁸ IV, 69.

⁵⁹ III, 8.

guaranty of freedom. To follow a course that is unpredictable means that at some point, here or there, the agent may exert its "power to begin by itself." The clash with forces outside and foreign to the body's nature furnish the necessary occasions. They produce, if unchecked, a lowering of the bodily temperature.⁶⁰ This is pain. Pain could not exist if every reaction were explained by the needs of organic maintenance. And if pain, the crush of greater forces, did not exist, life would go on undiminished in power and must prove itself infinite.⁶¹ The history of the world is directly against this hypothesis. Not only is every individual surpassed in power by another, organized matter included, but the actual status of any reactive capacity at a given moment is defined not by its intrinsic character, but by the value of the impressions made upon it from without.⁶² Thus, the instinct of defense is affected by the degree of contiguity of the aggressor, on the principle that every emotion whose cause is apprehended as nearby, is stronger than if the cause is conceived as remote.⁶³ Even when the stimulus has only a resemblance to, and is not identical with the sworn enemy, the feeling of resentment is awakened and drives the organism to remove the intruder from the field of influence. In man this same impulse becomes a resolute attempt to repay in kind an injury which has been undeservedly inflicted.⁶⁴

Instances like these throw into sharp relief the individual's struggle to perpetuate itself against great odds, amid many defeats, and facing eventual extermination. They assure us for one thing that alien forces, vigorous as they are, cannot put an end to organic initiative so long as life lasts. Such initiative is ingenious and diversified. The human body, for example, can determine the place of neighboring bodies and arrange them in a variety of ways. Every such arrangement receives a new definition. It is no longer read simply as a collocation of physical elements. The mechanical ideal is undisturbed, but upon it a new term has been superimposed. Yonder house is a composite of materials and forces, obedient to fixed rules. Is that a full

⁶⁰ III, 13, Sch.

⁶² IV, 3, 5.

⁶⁴ III, 16, 28, 40, C. ii.

⁶¹ IV, 4, Dem.

⁶³ IV, 9.

account? Is this structure one that has tumbled into place like a heap of rocks lying at the mountain's base? No; a new factor is added. We call it purpose. Now purpose is always connected with an organic system. A house, a nest, a honeycomb is teleological, because it springs from a system that has the power of adapting means to an end. The house can express the organic character of the builder, and nothing else. Hence, it is insufficient to say we build our house as a place of residence, as though to conform our action to an extra-organic scheme. The builder conceives the "conveniences of household life," and finds germinating in his mind a desire to realize them in a house of his own. Translated into teleological terms, this means that the impulse of self-preservation drives us to mould the resources of nature into shapes agreeable to our end.⁶⁵ In short, the type-end is fixed, although the means vary in proportion to the reactive capacity or degree of freedom attained. The end being defined by the appetite belongs to the system; it cannot be sought without. For if one tried to continue his existence for the sake of something else, he would destroy the organizing principle, leave his body a prey to conflicting stimuli and defeat the very purpose, hypothetically proposed, *viz.*, maintenance of life for the sake of another.⁶⁶

Again, the means adopted must be harmonious to the system whose end they are to subserve. Every system responds to its own kind of stimulus, and to no other. The habits of the ant are different from the habits of the bird; hence, their homes are different, although the instinct governing the making of hill or nest is the same. It follows that any object which fails to set up reaction in a neighboring organism can be of no benefit to it. They do not agree.⁶⁷ Or, if a reaction is set up, but is accompanied by a feeling of depression, the harmony of the system suffers impairment, temporarily at least. Thus, envy and jealousy lessen the power of body, by revealing our own ineptitude in comparison with another's triumphs. The balance can only be redressed by misconstruing the actions of other men, or unduly magnifying our own. In either case, the harmony is

⁶⁵ IV, Pref.

⁶⁶ IV, 25.

⁶⁷ IV, 31.

of a shadowy sort and soon vanishes.⁶⁸ To insure exact adaptation of external objects to organizing purpose, we must fix upon those which contribute to organic growth. This is the one and sure test. The law upon which we proceed reads thus: "In proportion as a given body is more fitted than others for acting and being acted upon in many ways at the same time, in that proportion is its mind more fitted than others' to receive many simultaneous perceptions."⁶⁹ Growth, in other words, is the increasing capacity for receiving and correlating the impressions of the outside world.

Now correlation demands a something to which impressions are necessarily related,—not a substratum in which sensuous qualities inhere, but a teleological principle explaining *why* perceptions fit into the movements of the system. For this reason growth cannot be measured by bulk, shape, movability or chemical reaction. Otherwise a stone would possess the same correlating power as the body of man. Those properties are common to all physical objects and do not offer a basis for comparison.⁷⁰ To correlate perceptions is to add a term not included in the mechanical estimate, *viz.*, the end in view. They must affirm the value of the conation, our power of activity.⁷¹ If the functional discharge be below the threshold of consciousness, its purposive character is just as real as though we had deliberately begun, *e.g.*, to breathe or digest our food.⁷² If the action be purely reflexive its correlative force is equally valid. Thus, we draw away the hand from a hot iron by a sudden exertion of muscular power which allows the mind no time to form a resolution. So intricate and far-reaching does the reflex become in highly organized structures, that we imitate the sudden removal of another's hand, although we ourselves have felt no pain. The eye automatically correlates the motion, perhaps with previous experiences now crystallized into habit, perhaps with the type-impulse of repeating the "emotion" of another.⁷³

Particular capacities for responding to external stimulus vary with different organisms. In one group the capacity is entirely

⁶⁸ III, 55, Sch.

⁶⁹ II, 13, Sch.

⁷⁰ IV, 32, Sch.

⁷¹ III, 54.

⁷² III, Def. Emot. i.

⁷³ III, Def. Emot. xxxiii.

instinctive. The power to act appears to be full-grown at birth. At any rate the instinct, *e.g.*, of a spider to weave his web is not better fitted to realize the end after a dozen exertions than at the start.⁷⁴ On the other hand the human species passes through perceptible changes from infancy to old age. The child is extremely limited in the use of his type-impulses; bright color, motion, unusual sounds, certain tactual sensations like tickling fill his repertory. Time and practice, change of environment, acquired traits transform him into a being responsive to a myriad stimuli which are eventually conceived as making for a common purpose.⁷⁵ Potentially, we may say, in germ, man has his faculties complete at birth. Actually, he takes many years to unfold what ant and spider can exercise at once. Hence the mode of development becomes a matter of surpassing interest.⁷⁶

How does the growth of sense-perception take place? The principle of association is the first instrument at hand. "If the mind," says Spinoza, "has been affected by two emotions at the same time, it will in the future when affected by one be also affected by the other."⁷⁷ A certain type-perception, *e.g.*, of the eye, could never progress in efficiency, could never lead to true knowledge, if it consisted of a succession of unrelated images, set up as reactions to adjacent objects. To satisfy the purpose of the primitive appetite, the lust for life, perceptions of different sense-organs must be exactly and immediately correlated. For example, the hunger of the dog, the rabbit once tasted, the sight of similar prey on the succeeding day, the juxtaposition of the percepts of sight and taste, this is the law of association, which Spinoza lays at the foundation of his psychology.⁷⁸ The progressive application of the law under ever more complex conditions constitutes the growth of an organism, and in the course of ages also the development of a species.⁷⁹

Again, the principle of acquired traits is central to this scheme. "Anything can be by accident [*i.e.*, not necessarily included in the

⁷⁴ Cf. III, 57, Sch.

⁷⁵ V, 39, Sch.

⁷⁶ IV, 38.

⁷⁷ III, 14.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose*.

⁷⁹ III, 14.

impulse] be the cause of pleasure, pain and desire.”⁸⁰ Not what a certain function does in its usual discharge but what it effects when a new stimulus acts upon it, is oftentimes the determining fact in organic life. It is thus that the house-dog is trained by successive correlations to follow the chase, and the hunting-dog no longer to react to the scent of the hare.⁸¹ The polarizing of type-reactions into differentiating habits is the sure way of marking the growth of a particular impulse. For one emotion may be fixed so deeply in the organic structure as to overcome all countervailing emotions⁸² and even reproduce itself in the offspring. Then a new line is cloven, the curve of progress is shaped. This successful organism has received and correlated at one time more sense-perceptions than its nearest neighbor.⁸³

Still further: the principle of opposition plays an important part in developing the individual. Pain, depression, fatigue are bound to enter the scheme of life, since power is graded. But pain is contrary to the elemental conation and cannot be indolently harbored. Hence, the effort to remove it must be proportionate to the intensity of suffering.⁸⁴ The more desperate the body's plight the more determined will be the output of strength to rescue it or any part from dissolution. The curative and compensatory appliances of organic nature, *e.g.*, growth of new skin, or the heightening of the sense of touch when the optic nerve has been destroyed, prove decisively how far it has gone from the mere mechanical control of forces.⁸⁵ Such a remarkable psychical correlation as is witnessed in the animal's endeavor to remove the instrument of pain from the presence of its young shows the possible extent of the principle.⁸⁶ Indeed, for all organized creatures there can be no surcease of effort until equilibrium be restored, the body exerting its type-reactions in face of every possible stimulus, the mind correlating every experience into a conscious whole.⁸⁷ We conclude that an organism whose fundamental tendency unfolds in a series of harmonious acts and habits is heir to a freedom none the less defined than that of the reflective mind of man. Whatever acts by purpose is free.

⁸⁰ III, 15.⁸¹ V, Pref.⁸² IV, 6.⁸³ III, 56, Dem.⁸⁴ III, 11, Sch.⁸⁵ III, 37, Dem.⁸⁶ Cf. III, 22.⁸⁷ IV, 45, Sch.

III

Thus far we have analyzed the principle of self-preservation. We have found that it expresses the nature of an organism, *viz.*, the adaptation of means to end, that it accounts for the changes incident to growth, that it unifies all reactions, no matter from what stimulating causes, and organizes them into a system. We have seen, too, that apparently separate type-impulses, like resentment, association, imitation, are reducible to this. There remains another appetite universally at work, that of reproduction, and this we must for a moment consider.

The supreme test by which organism and mechanical contrivance are distinguished has by some been set up here.⁸⁸ Can this bundle of physical properties perpetuate its kind? If it can, its teleological character is unquestionably demonstrated. Spinoza recognizes the importance of this impulse, and argues that while the specific nature of living bodies is different, while we define a horse in other terms than those applied to man, insect or bird, the procreative instinct is the same, a power which all possess by virtue of their common organic heritage.⁸⁹ The point now to be determined is, whether the impulse is independent of the will-to-be,—a competitor for equal rank in the affections of the race; or whether it must be subsumed under the first as contributing to its realization. Spinoza, we do not hesitate to say, took the second view. The organism, insofar as it is active, can accept no stimulus save what tends to promote its lust for life. If the racial instinct entails disastrous consequences, as it frequently does, it is excluded as a key to the knowledge of its terms. To many this view, when applied to ethics, grafts the grossest kind of impiety and selfishness on the character of man.⁹⁰ Their mistake arises from equating the two impulses as of primary and therefore competitive value. The source of all teleological values, Ethics included, is utility,—what will secure the individual welfare. Thus the functioning of the sex-impulse, as of others, is estimated in terms of pleasure.

⁸⁸ Cf. Kant, *Urtheilskraft*, § 80. ⁹⁰ IV, 19, Sch.

⁸⁹ III, 57, Sch.

Now pleasure is not simply an empirical fact; it is involved in the nature of the impulse. We endeavor to affirm concerning ourselves everything which we conceive to affect us favorably.⁹¹ The racial instinct carries with it an idea of gratification, a heightening of the bodily feeling. Hence, the organism seizes upon the object which promises to effect that end.

At this point the acquisitive faculty lends its aid. The animal not only desires food, but takes steps to procure it. The child not only conceives an interest in what his neighbor has, but makes a bold effort to appropriate it.⁹² The mature man seeks to acquire both the property and so to say the *personality* of his fellowmen. He does his best to make other men live according to his scheme of social order.⁹³ In no field is this instinct so inveterately urgent as in the relations of the sexes. The male desires his mate, not as in the reflective stage of human life for the propagation of the species, but solely for the nourishing of the particular organ, without whose proper satisfaction the equilibrium of the body could not be maintained.⁹⁴ Individual desires incidentally foster the interests of the race; but this is not their primary purpose.

Does this account seem to reverse the natural order? Must we not rather think of a *Welttrieb* moving through the several strata of biologic history, an energy which *this* insect or *that* man did not create and could not refrain from objectifying? We answer, Purpose as defined by the reproductive impulse is present to us only in the individual. There is no Man, there is no Organic System, except as we find their properties at work in an infinite number of single bodies.⁹⁵ To know what an impulse is, we must know what it can do; and the theatre for every world-tendency is an organized body. In the organism, certainly of the truly conscious kind, reproduction is subordinate to self-preservation, the species to the man. Hence, we conclude that the nature of an organism is not changed by emphasizing its secondary instinct; and that it is still free to pursue the type of purpose embodied in its particular form.

⁹¹ III, 25.⁹² III, 31, Sch.⁹³ II, 40, Sch. i.⁹⁴ III, 32, Sch.⁹⁵ IV, App. 20, 27.

IV

Freedom, we have seen, is confined within the structural limits prescribed at birth. But freedom must have degrees, inasmuch as conscious life is infinitely diversified. To what extent is the ant free, to what extent the horse? How does the freedom of these species fall short of that exercised by man? In general, what rule can we deduce for determining the increase of free acts? Freedom, we reply, is in direct ratio to the mind's capacity for correlating perceptions. It goes without saying that the mature man possesses a freedom which the unweaned child does not know. Yet the human mind, even in its infancy, has within it certain "adequate" as well as "inadequate" ideas. An idea is adequate, when it reflects an exertion entirely appropriate to its body's powers, as, *e.g.*, when it seeks for food or cries out in pain. Though purely reflexive, such acts are free.⁹⁶ We may then infer that the elementary reaction, if it and none other emerges, will be sufficient to classify its bearer as the first term in the teleological series. For that conation it must have, in order to come under the term "organic." From such a beginning the evolution of life proceeds by the multiplying and crossing of reactions till man is reached. We must not expect to find in Spinoza a scientific order such as modern biology has conceived. He recognized its general divisions, and distinguished the psychical factor as the same in each.⁹⁷ The genetic relations of the several groups, their origin in a common ancestor, especially the phenomenon of arrested development, were matters beyond the ken of his times. But whatever his deficiency in detail, he seized the cardinal principle of change, which is not deviation in shape or structural equipment, but a new way of reacting to a given stimulus. In brief, he writes a psychology, not a treatise on physiology. He does not analyze the complex forms of organic evolution; he asks how such evolution takes place in view of the end to be gained. Hence, when a new type-reaction appears, we know that the body has accommodated itself in some new way to its environment. To that extent the

⁹⁶ III, 1.⁹⁷ III, 57, Sch.

freedom increases, and by this means the series is to unfold step by step until a new and untried factor comes above the surface in the reflective mind of man.⁹⁸

Every new type of response to environment carries with it, we may believe, a feeling of increased power. When the reaction is of such a character as to modify radically the structural life of the organism, an entirely new species is broken in. It is then that gratification attending functional discharge is most keenly felt. "When the mind contemplates itself and its own power of activity it experiences pleasure; and the pleasure is greater in proportion to the distinctness by which it conceives itself and its power."⁹⁹ It follows that type-reactions in a complex structure provoke a finer kind of gratification than those, say, of the purely vegetative organs.

To project human feelings into the experience of the lower forms may be precarious; yet it is extremely suggestive. If we select two widely separate impulses, one common to man and Infusorian, the other common to man and mammal, *e.g.*, dog, compare them in our own body, and project that experience into the parallel organisms, we might get a basis for judging the relative feelings. The satisfaction of hunger and the pleasure of associating images in mind, both effects of appetition, are cases in point.¹⁰⁰ The contrast is even more glaring when we take a single impulse and run out its forms on the different levels of consciousness. Thus, the endeavor to convey an "idea" to a neighbor, to "make ourselves understood," varies as to intensity of gratification with the order of mind affected. The dog barks, the ape gesticulates, man speaks. For man there is a real pleasure in the functioning of the vocal organs. He gives it the best title in his lexicon, *viz.*, freedom, not knowing that he is acting out a type-purpose of his kind. But his very self-complacence goes to show how much more reactive value attaches to articulate speech than to shrug of shoulder or movement of hand.¹⁰¹ These facts are summed up by Spinoza in a general rule: "The emotion of a given individual differs from that of

⁹⁸ Cf. V. Pref.

⁹⁹ III, 53.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. III, 2, Sch.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

another only insofar as the nature of one differs from the nature of the other."¹⁰² The pitch of progress and the degree of freedom are determined by the number and complexity of the mechanisms set up in the cortical centres. But these in higher orders of life are so delicately framed and intricately interlaced as to make analysis impossible. We can only take the typical reactions, and judge the rest by them.¹⁰³

We have spoken of correlating sense-perceptions, co-ordinating the elements of experience; just what does this mean? What is the principle by which the mind gives continuity to its images? We call it consciousness, the regarding of several things at once and the discriminating of their stimulating values.¹⁰⁴ To be conscious is not to add a new force to the assemblage of mechanisms, guiding them to their proper coalescence. It is to express their relations by a new term, hitherto called purpose, now called conscious purpose. With it as correlating principle, bodily actions operate together in a system; the organism acts in its own right. We may define consciousness as the *idea* of the mind, its distinctive essence, conceived as mode of thought, and not involving physical motion.¹⁰⁵ It tells us what the sensations mean as they are transmitted by organs of the body. It assesses the value of every reaction and ultimately of every stimulus. It leads us to reject *this* stimulus as repugnant to organic growth and accept *that* as in line with our needs. The finer the structural apparatus, the more delicate will be its distinctions. The more varied the environment, the more diversified will be the sense-perceptions, and hence the more expert the work of consciousness in correlating them into a system. This integrating tendency in the march of evolution renders the organism less and less dependent on external stimuli, more and more competent to live its own life.¹⁰⁶ But since body always requires the support of body, conscious independence can never be reached. The limit of the series can only be an Ideal.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the emerging of consciousness on the level of human intellect introduces a new phase of correlation and makes possible a new

¹⁰² III, 57.¹⁰⁴ II, 29, Sch.¹⁰⁶ II, 13, Sch.¹⁰³ III, 59, Sch.¹⁰⁵ II, 21, Sch.¹⁰⁷ IV, 18, Sch.

degree of freedom. It remains for us to consider what additional type-purposes enter into the definition of man.

V

The first of these is the forming of judgment, the setting of the concrete data of experience into relations. Every perceptual act is in a certain sense a judgment. It includes something more than an image framed "at the back of the eye or in the midst of the brain." Reality is asserted or denied. Or, to put it another way, perception fixes the object in relations of time and space. The mind has a tendency to effect such co-ordination; it cannot be mind if deprived of that principle.¹⁰⁸ Nor can mind exist without the tendency to revive perceptual images on the reappearance of appropriate stimulus. We cannot act in the most casual way, *e.g.*, speak a word, without remembering that we have done so. Bodily modifications guarantee that. Now, memory is a renewal of previous sensory judgments.¹⁰⁹ Such judgments, however, being reflexive, deal with objects immediately before the mind,—objects to which the mind inevitably reacts, whether approved by antecedent experience or not. Intellectual judgments state a new term, discharge a new function, *viz.*, that of understanding. They make a synthesis of the sensuous manifold. The mind begins to think, and that is its highest office.¹¹⁰ Intelligence as a type-purpose comes into clear light when we relate it to the conational efforts of man. For it is characteristic of Spinoza's philosophy that he does not stop with determining logical categories as such, but goes on to affirm their empirical values. Now the end of action is not defined in terms of impulse, but is dramatically set down as an idea to be aimed at. The intellect exercises a strict vigilance over the impulse life of men. It trains and directs the particular appetites and restrains them from excess; not by playing one impulse off against another,—a process which must go on indefinitely,—but by representing an ideal purpose, a reflective choice. Thus the instinct of imitation, vigorous as we have seen in all organized bodies, may be checked by exposing the

¹⁰⁸ II, 48, Sch.¹⁰⁹ III, 2, Sch.¹¹⁰ IV, 28, Dem.

results of indiscriminately repeating the habits of another;—an antithesis between ends common to man and beast and the intellectual principle unique in man.¹¹¹ It is the precise difference between a sensuous judgment: the hand strikes,—and the judgment of the understanding: the hand strikes to hurt; the one an act expressing the body's nature, the other an act enforcing an ideal end.¹¹²

It is in the functioning of intellect that ethical implications appear. Physical appetites involve no difference in quality. They are always good. Whatever interferes with their free and normal activity is bad. Since, however, we may experience serious damage by reacting to every passing stimulus, it is of great importance to men to have a "type-character" before the mind, a definite mould into which tendencies may be cast. The framing of a Type is proof-positive of man's advance beyond the pale of purely perceptual judgment. He can now plan, and every plan carries him away from the sphere of automatic reaction.¹¹³ The end *qua* end may be native to him and his unspeaking neighbor. For instance, both are driven by self-preservative instinct to build dwellings and lay up in store for future needs. But intellect re-arranges surrounding material in a planful manner, which insect and rodent cannot imitate. It does not keep man's body from reacting differently to changed environment; it selects from stimulating forces those, *e.g.*, which when *naturally* acting cause death, when *ideally* composed inure to his highest advantage. We must be careful not to think of this synthetic principle as a new mechanical force moving amongst the nerve-tracts of the brain. It is not that; it is rather a new reading of bodily modifications which have now reached an unprecedented grade of executive refinement.¹¹⁴ But with such refinement emerges the capacity for affirming, This way is better than that. That is to say, teleological values take their place in the reflective life of man.

If now the environment be not hard, unfriendly matter, which only extremely high skill can conquer, but the flesh and blood

¹¹¹ IV, App. 30, 13.

¹¹³ IV, Pref.

¹¹² IV, 59, Sch.

¹¹⁴ IV, App. 7.

of our own kind, intellect is alert to create values of a different sort. It devises an instrument for communication, language, and into it pours the wealth of conceptual judgment.¹¹⁵ Man becomes to man his most useful accessory. He can understand thought, and return in kind. Henceforward, intercourse is not on the basis of impulsive gesture, but of the progressive interchange of ideas. Love or mutual appetite is no longer a static force; it passes into friendship, which is not content with gleam of eye or clasp of hand, or other automatic sign. It demands freedom of soul, one mind entering another. Interests now become common; men can desire and have the same thing, which however is not tangible, but the product of an idea,—justice, equity and harmony. And this is possible just because the mind is so constituted that it can conceive a term which does not answer to the empirical returns of sense.¹¹⁶

But mind must not only correlate perceptual impressions; it must define the laws by which they can be brought into synthesis. It must, in other words, make an examination of itself; or as Spinoza puts it, it must separate emotions from the thought of an external cause and connect them with true, *i.e.*, universally valid, ideas.¹¹⁷ Thus, the conceptualizing tendency has two general forms: resemblance and continuity. Several figures pass before us and leave their impressions on the mind. By the law of intellect we are bound to note the points of similarity. Different observers are affected by different stimuli,—height, walking on two feet, explosive sounds called laughter, exchange of communications indicating reason. But whatever be the type-reaction induced, the percept gets permanent value solely from the fact that the mind puts two or more instances together and says, They are like. Every such judgment is an application of the constitutive principle of mind.¹¹⁸ The second form may be illustrated in this way. The child sees a succession of figures for the first time: Peter in the morning, Paul at noon, and Simon in the evening. The next day, at the rising of the sun, he will think of Peter, Paul and Simon in order as parts of the

¹¹⁵ Cf. *De Intel. Emend.* pg. 11.

¹¹⁶ IV, App. 9, etc.

¹¹⁷ V, 4, Sch.

¹¹⁸ II, 40, Sch.

day's projected experience. Should one, however, say Simon, fail to appear, and James take his place, the third day will show a modified program, with Simon and James alternately occupying the third point in the series. Perceptual association has expanded into the principle of continuity, which the mind forces upon the observer. Now because the mind can take two percepts and standing apart from their objects say within itself: "These are alike, these follow one another," eventually it sees itself as the judge of concepts, the subject over against object; it gets the idea of the consciousness or identity of self. Then the supreme purpose of mind, *viz.*, self-realization, comes into view, and man's proper freedom is assured.¹¹⁹

How can he reach the goal?

¹¹⁹ IV, App. 4.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEST OF CHARACTER

We have thus far examined the concept of purpose as embodying the freedom which we may claim for man in a world of mechanical law. Man is not free to break the bonds of physical force. They gird him as closely as they do the motions of a planet. To act at all he must act within the sphere of body, which obeys inevitably the rules of exact determination. Nevertheless, he is not like a bar of steel or flying meteor, subject only to the interpretation of mechanism. He is organic. His bodily parts combine into a unity. He is so constituted that his actions tend to a fixed end or result. In this respect he is on equal footing with all organized bodies, occupying the field of mechanism, but displaying certain properties which mechanism does not explain. Their common mark is purpose. Purpose in its typical form belongs to every creature which reacts to its environment; more restrictedly to those which possess the element of consciousness, or, as we should say, are equipped with a nervous system. Hence, the human species cannot assert here any primordial rights. The most general purpose, defined by Spinoza as the thing's essence, is its endeavor to persist in its own being. Annexed to this, and in the view of some of equal value, is the desire for the perpetuation of the species. Still other purposes developing from the first distinguish the steps of organic order, and define the degree of freedom. The highest of all type-purposes, *viz.*, the powers of intellect, are found in man and guaranty to him the greatest range of freedom.

The acts of man follow strictly from the appetites of body and the habits of mind. They constitute a class, being repeated by a multitude of individuals of the same nature. Thus, when the agent discharges any functional energy, *e.g.*, when he reaches his hand in quest of food, when he shrinks from some object which threatens to limit or destroy his ability to survive, when

he frames a concept and articulates it in speech, he is by that act obeying the mandate of his kind. But obedience to universal impulse, so far from branding him as a slave, really forms the first element in his freedom. Freedom consists at root in fulfilling the purpose of our nature. It is beside the point to complain that the channels of activity are charted for us; that the lines of organic life are inexorably drawn. On the higher ranges of human experience we do not hesitate to say that the man is not free who degrades his physical desires to the uses of an animal existence. Conversely, it must appear that he who carries out the purpose embodied in the common course of nature, who performs such actions as are of primary importance in life and reflect his chiefest desire, will *eo ipso* exercise freedom, though it be as yet only of a generic kind.

I

But purpose must be studied not alone as the expression of a type. We must seek out its values in the careers of individuals. Men do not conduct their business, perform their social duties, ponder on the deep things of philosophy, as though they were satisfying the impulses of the race. Race consciousness is the end, not the beginning of reflective thought. We act in the first instance always as individual persons. It is essential to understand what we mean by the term.

Theoretically conceived, the individual is an abstracted part of the whole. It cannot exist as separate substance, as one of the factors into which matter is divided. The drop of water may appear to be distinct from other drops, from the flow of the river, the depth of ocean, or the unmeasured expanse of the atmosphere. In reality it is extended substance, which the mind regards as individualized for its own critical purposes.¹ In the same way an organism sustains a partitive relation to the whole of nature. It exists as body, but in a modal, not real sense. It must be examined in the same way that we examine the lines, planes and solids of geometry, *viz.*, as segments of extended

¹ I, 15, Sch.

space.² Since we cannot comprehend infinite substance by itself, we must discover its meaning through the relations in which individuals stand to one another and the whole.

Let us observe then that man is an individual in the world of extension, and that as such he is subject to reactive changes which are determined first by the nature of impinging bodies, and secondly by his own nature.³ To fix upon an individual purpose we must meet both these conditions. This man, whom we now look upon, has his own environment and cannot disentangle his body from the network of its influence. Not a single sensory current passes through his system, of which he is the unconditioned cause.⁴ To be individuated by the coordinates of time and place, far from setting him apart, serves rather to cement more firmly his position in the common order of nature. Thus, as we shall see, percepts given by nearby objects are indefinitely more vivid than when the cause of excitation is somewhat removed. Impressions derived from contingent bodies, *i.e.*, bodies dependent for action on secondary causes, are fainter than those instilled by necessary things.⁵ If a man could withdraw himself from the toils of mechanism he might live his life without fear of decay or extinction. But this could only be done by giving him infinite power, or forcing nature to subserve his elemental impulse continually,—both of which are impossible.⁶ So long as a man remains an individual in a universe of individuals he cannot escape the fate incident to his place. That he must maintain his place here, is deduced by Spinoza from the fact that nature as a whole cannot be conceived without her constitutive parts.⁷

The purpose of the man, whom we single out for study, will be in part determined by the milieu in which he finds himself. But stock, stone and man come impartially under this rule. Hence, there is a second condition. The body affected undergoes just such changes, and no others, as are compatible with its nature. Here again, the rule is universally valid. Stock, stone and man evince structural changes corresponding to the

² III, Pref.

³ II, 16.

⁴ IV, 4.

⁵ IV, 9, 11.

⁶ IV, 4.

⁷ IV, 2.

particular manner in which the principle of molecular attraction operates in each. Only, a serious difference now appears. In the first condition, the type of environing influence did not vary; at least we could posit its substantial sameness. In the second condition, we are forced at once to recognize two divergent forms, one being acted upon, the other reacting. The nature of man is different from the nature of a stone, and cannot be derived from it.⁸ The difference lies not in the kind of chemical constituents, but in the former's tendency to adapt all influences to the maintenance of his own life. In the sphere of organism the individual does not wait, so to say, for the external impact to be made; he invites it; he goes out to meet it. The absorptive power of the organism makes its attitude toward inanimate matter entirely unique. But once again we meet divergences, not in kind but in degree. How far can the organism *absorb* its environment? Or, what sort of stimulus awakens reaction in each case? Evidence shows that a common impulse may prevail, but different objects set up response in different organisms. Thus, horse and man are distinguished equally by the desire of procreation; but the desire partakes always of the specific nature of the organism.⁹ Evidence shows, too, that within the species or family group divergent traits appear. Each individual, notably among species of more complex form, is just a little different from its neighbor of the same order. We do not mean that the primary appetite has changed. The horse remains a horse, and the dog a dog.¹⁰ But one particular element in its organic equipment has been developed; for example, the dog has been trained to follow the chase; or he belongs to a breed trained through several generations to this particular reaction. We cannot hold that it is mere environment that makes his scent keen and hearing acute; the house-dog may be subject to the same stimuli, but is certainly at first dull of response.¹¹ There is an *essence* in each, a habit or mode of reaction, which differentiates him from every other of the same organic species. This is not the same as the principle of succession,—one in a

⁸ I, 8, Sch. i.

⁹ III, 57, Sch.

¹⁰ IV, Pref.

¹¹ V, Pref.

series of units. Individuality is more than bodily separateness; it is the nucleus of character.

The fact we have just noted is attested by the nature of the gratification enjoyed. It is wellnigh impossible, as we have shown,¹² to represent to ourselves the feelings of inarticulate organisms. We can only say that they differ in intensity according to the degree of reticulation of the nervous system. Hence, we hesitate to affix the term "character" to the dog. For, so far as we can determine, he has no power of sitting in judgment on his own reactions; he has no tendency to compare their several values, as denoted by the accruing pleasure.¹³ With man the case stands otherwise. Differentiation is the key to experience. The lofty look of the philosopher and the besotted leer of the drunkard express antipodal natures, whose diversity even the clogged brain of the latter cannot fail to understand. A character has developed. On what basis? Not alone by virtue of the presence of varying stimuli. The reason goes deeper. The individuals themselves are not agreed in their original tendencies. The one finds himself emphasizing certain impulses which depend on a foreign source for support; the other seeks to eliminate perceptual images, and bathe himself in the glow of ideas. Being men, they occupy a coign of vantage; they can study their own experience and detect the "special" points in which they differ from others. The pleasure of our human species consists at times in realizing that in this quality or that we excel some less favored companion; and conversely, we sink into depression when we find another exulting in perfections which are denied us.¹⁴ Again, the process of characterization may be examined from the standpoint of some particular emotion. Thus, love as a permanent impulse assumes several forms, the affection of husband and wife, the care of children, the broad communal interests of society. Each one of these is subject to special treatment in the lives of different agents. The types of character are infinitely diversified, the brutal father, the kind father, the indulgent father, each type being necessarily corre-

¹² *Supra*, pg. 42.

¹³ III, 57, Sch.

¹⁴ III, 55, Sch.

lated to the nature of the individual under review.¹⁵ We conclude that men as individuals differ, not because they are identified by different spacial coordinates, but because they behave in different ways towards surrounding forces.¹⁶

II

The way is now cleared for inquiring how a man develops the form of behavior which we have settled to call his character. We note that judgments of mind are affirmed in the same manner as perceptions of sense. They are purposeful acts, definite exertions of power. Every time we analyze a concept, try out a mathematical formula, criticize the technique of a picture,—highly speculative modes of thought,—we discharge the function of mind. An idea is not an inanimate symbol devised by logic to interpret the meaning of conduct; it throbs with the red blood of living men. It is an act of will, recording a real change in the experience of the agent.¹⁷ But as an intellectual term it does not stand alone. It is the final member of a series, and cannot be explained apart from the preliminary steps. Every decision depends on an adequate cause.¹⁸ Hence, Jacobi's definition of a free agent as one who can initiate a course of conduct directly opposed to, or not included in the content of proposed motives, is baseless. Every act is precisely fortified with actuating reasons; for, as Leibnitz pointed out,¹⁹ when we reject competing incentives, we do not relieve the mind of constraint, but rather introduce a new force, *viz.*, the caprice of judgment.

But what shall we say of a situation where we cannot decide—where impulses are evenly balanced, and reflection coming to our aid cannot by closest computation determine which side ought to prevail? Here we are volitionally at a standstill, like Buridan's ass, and must nullify our power to act, that is, to exist,—unless we strike off at a tangent and act without sufficient cause. The picture, however, is not true to life. There is no calculus in practical conduct, with debit and credit exactly

¹⁵ Cf. III, 56, Sch.

¹⁷ II, 43, Sch.

¹⁶ II, 13 Sch.

¹⁸ II, 48.

¹⁹ Nouveaux Essais, Bk. II, Ch. 21, Sects. 25, 39.

even. Action proceeds on regular lines by denotable stages to a particular end. It is determined at first by purposes of the type; it reaches at length the level of reflection, where a man marks out his path, recognizes his character, increases his degree of freedom, and presses steadily towards a goal.²⁰

It will appear, then, that the system which reflective consciousness develops is defined by purposive action. Freedom cannot be a matter of ideas, conceived as a body of categorized facts. The inadequacy of the view which calls a man free because he has made out a list of universal laws, is well illustrated in Fischer's conclusion that Spinoza has analyzed the laws of human life, but given no ethical imperative. There is no imperative when a man is invited to see the good, but not apply it. True knowledge as such is of no value in checking emotion; it must enter the current of daily life as an impulse to action. Mere theoretical differences of good and evil, presented as ideals to the mind, cannot influence the choice or direction of an emotion in the slightest degree.²¹ Emotion can only be controlled by emotion.²² In short, truth cannot fashion conduct until a man strives to adapt his course to the harmonious activities of nature. To do this he need not be a scientific observer or a sage versed in the secrets of the ages. He who deliberately follows the purpose of his mind will exercise his individual freedom untrammelled. Still, he must not be surprised to find his free flight interrupted, even stopped altogether by the tumultuous rush of commonplace reactions.²³ The pleasing fancy that critical analysis of this or that appetite will engender an invincible resolution, is entirely misleading. For such resolution is itself a discharge of purposeful energy, and must take its place along with similar organic tendencies. If these be stimulated in a definite direction, if, *e.g.*, the mind be excited to hope for eventual triumph in a particular crusade because of momentary successes, shall the cool warning of Experience that the elements conducive to the end in view are not present, serve to abate one jot or tittle the

²⁰ II, 49, Sch.

²² IV, 7.

²¹ IV, 14.

²³ IV, 15.

ardor which has seized upon body and soul?²⁴ But if reason can retain its place amid the crush of sensory impressions, we may take it to be a sure gauge of character. May we not in our mature practice verify the crucial formula: "Every emotion aroused by the senses can also be determined by the reflective mind?"²⁵ If that be true, then it is likewise true that to live and to live rightly are one and same thing. Virtue is the exact fulfilment of purpose; virtue is behavior.²⁶

But how are we to discover the teleological value of an act? The answer is, By its effect on behavior. The rule is inflexible, the same for all species. How much did the act increase or diminish the power of the organism? Did it produce pleasure or pain? Since man's unique purpose is intellectual, we ask: What was the state of mind after this perception or that argument? Was his body of knowledge enlarged? Was analytical insight quickened? Is he better able to shape his conduct by the laws of universal necessity? The residual feeling denotes the value of the reaction.²⁷ Hence, we seek the state of mind known as Self-approval, where all emotional threads are woven into a consistent whole after the order of nature; where a man's character by its very coherence defines the value of each impending reaction.²⁸ Thoughts bred by hatred, envy, pride are excluded, because they invariably defeat the work of the organizing principle. On the other hand, sentiments of veracity and benevolence stimulate the mind and mark out the way to orderly conduct. We feel the steady march in the construction of character, all our habits conspiring to one end.²⁹

Again, if pleasure be the test of good, pain must be the ground for our rejection of an injurious stimulus. Very careful discrimination is needed at this point. Certain emotional traits have crept into the company of moral excellences which have no right there. Thus, humility is held by some to be a virtue, but is in reality the equivalent of pain. It springs from a man's contemplation of his own weakness, and is accompanied by a loss of power. For how shall we obtain intellectual vigor by

²⁴ IV, 47.²⁶ IV, 21, 24.²⁸ IV, 52.²⁰ IV, 59.²⁷ IV, 26.²⁹ IV, 73, Sch.

studying what depresses our mind below its par? We need to grasp ideas which surpass our own in sweep and complexity. In that way only can we widen our scope of action.³⁰ We must deal with anticipations of evil in the same heroic manner. Fear is concern in face of something which we cannot fully understand.³¹ It may automatically connect itself with a pleasurable image which excludes the existence of the pain-giving object; so that when it occurs as revived idea or new sensory experience the other idea is necessarily present. Thus, men delight to rehearse the dangers of the past, from which they have made good their escape, pleasure exceeding pain in the final account.³² But fear will continue to obtrude its depressing touch until we have extinguished its force through a knowledge of its cause, or faced the actual dangers frankly and conquered them. It is easy to see how men differ from one another in their attitude towards objects, or events which have excited their apprehension.³³ In no case is the test so exacting as in the anticipation of death. Violent efforts are made, every available resource subsidized to ward off the end. Tastes and habits of a lifetime are shattered. In their extremity men accept food and medicine, which their soul loathes. But the protest is vain. Man must die. How shall he meet the final hour? The wise man knows the meaning of death and its certainty. His duty is not to meditate on its inevitable approach, but on the true profits of a free and harmonious life.³⁴ Pain then passes into pleasure, and the equilibrium of character is maintained.

We conclude that the state of mind succeeding reaction registers both its intensity and the power of the stimulating object.

III

The process which we have called *characterization*, and may define as the working of type-purposes into an individual system, pursues its end by the adoption of means. The agent and the environment conspire to determine what the means shall be. These two are so commingled in the drive of action as to be

³⁰ IV, 50, Dem.

³² III, 47, Sch.

³¹ III, Def. Emot. xiii.

³³ IV, 69, Sch.

³⁴ IV, 63, 67.

virtually inseparable, except by way of analysis. The rule is simple; nothing which is different in its properties can in any way affect us for good or harm; and conversely, whatever agrees with our nature is useful to us, that is, sets up reaction in our organism.³⁵ For example, inorganic matter cannot nourish the human body, since it has no element that corresponds with the organizing principle of the digestive system. But organized substances are of great value to us,—animals included, the fact that they are lower than we in the scale of consciousness justifying us in using them to suit our needs.³⁶ So manifold are the appetites of the body, and so diverse their modes of satisfaction, that we must recruit its vigor and equip the mind for its work by tapping every source within reach. "It is the part of a wise man to refresh himself with agreeable food and drink, as well as with perfumes, the beauty of plants, dress, music, the exercise of sports, theatrical spectacles,—in short anything that he can use without damage to another." Every such stimulus harmoniously assimilated lifts the type of character, and distinguishes its owner from every other unit in the social organism. Of course, opinion is not unanimous as to what constitutes a true stimulus. Superstition often accounts that to be good which administers pain, and rules out merriment and laughter as subversive of orderly conduct. But why should we not drive away melancholy as well as hunger? Only an envious neighbor or malevolent divinity could take pleasure in our discomfort or reckon tears and sobs and inward dread as essential parts of an ethical calculus.³⁷

In the main, however, men are agreed as to the basis of gratification, and by reason of that agreement enter paradoxically the disharmonies of social life. Desire must be judged not only by its typical form, but by its ability to reach the goal in individual cases. Thus, if two men covet the same thing, they are at one in the primary impulse. But the issue of action is different. Peter has the image of the desired object as in his possession, Paul conceives it as lost. Pleasure and pain, mental states subsequent to reaction, determine the value of experience.

³⁵ IV, 29, 31.

³⁶ III, 37, Sch. i.

³⁷ IV, 45, Sch.

Hence, pain and pleasure attest the particular grade of characterization realized at the moment.³⁵ So much for an individual object. Suppose now we are called upon to reckon the worth of a symbol, like money, the means of civilized intercourse. Three general reactions are possible. First, money may be regarded as the *sine qua non* of personal gratification,—in the vulgar mind, the source of success, luxury in dress and food, splendor of position, power over one's fellowmen. These things they desire; hence, men react to the money-stimulus. Again, money as a material object may engross the attention. Not a piece of it is relinquished even for bodily wants without a shoot of pain. The acquisitive instinct has almost annulled the lust of life. Lastly, the sage knowing the true uses of wealth remains content with a little, and escapes the contentions of the multitude in an unbroken peace of mind.³⁹ The first character may pass into the second, the second rarely into the first; but almost never either of them into the renunciation of the third.

It is universally agreed that from the standpoint of his unique purpose nothing is so useful to man as man. The psychological grounds we have already considered. Let us now observe in what way utility may be secured. It cannot come from passive acceptance of sensuous impressions. They are "uncharacterized" emotions, common to man and beast. If we are looking only for what will gratify the five senses of body we cannot find a single object altogether useful to all men. Whenever we affirm our natural right to life and the means for its maintenance, we immediately tread upon another's territory. Interests conflict; dissensions, war and death follow. The primary purpose is thwarted.⁴⁰ There is, however, a good common to all men. It has no mechanical equivalent; it is not individuated by time and place. It is man's nature construed from the angle of his unique purpose. It is the "other aspect" of his behavior. Man alone possesses this good, inasmuch as man alone can correlate his conduct with the universal activity of nature. And man is bound to introduce it into the life of his neighbor; his own security depends upon mutual enjoyment. Precisely what

³⁵ IV, 33; 34, Sch.³⁹ IV, App. 28, 29.⁴⁰ IV, 37, Sch. ii.

is this good, which may become the property of all without engendering intrigue or competition? It is difficult to define it in any terms short of a general formula, as, for example, "knowledge of God."⁴¹ Nevertheless, from time immemorial men have sought to realize it in the organic constitution of the State. Whatever guarantees harmony in the social structure is undeniably good. Love of justice, respect for law, due regard for the interests of all citizens are basic principles both of civil government and individual liberty. Indeed, it may be taken as an axiom that freedom gained within the bounds of society is far superior to that presupposed in the life of solitude. Why? Because character requires discipline, such as the heedless youth chafes under, and indignantly throws off by quitting his father's house, only to learn in the hardships of war and the penalties of camp how through tribulation we must enter into tranquillity of mind.⁴²

The tentative realization of the good has given opportunity for the diversification of character. Character does not settle down to the dead level of monotony. Being still in the field of physical effort, it cannot escape the peculiarities of reaction incident to the constant changes of life. Hence, differences in character will depend on a man's success in systematizing his crowding sense-perceptions after the pattern of nature's harmony.⁴³ He will at the same time make sure of his own degree of freedom. Freedom increases with the steady growth of character, that is to say, with every successful affirmation of his unique purpose. He has abandoned the uncritical notion that we are abridged in function because we cannot be as tall as trees, as aggressive as a lion, or as distinguished in some particular trait as our neighbor.⁴⁴ To be free, we must steadily move within the limits of our purpose, becoming every moment more sure of our course, and hence more independent in its construction. Therefore, whenever a purpose conceived by the imagination is found false and inadequate in the light of universal experience we shall prove our liberty by expelling it. And when-

⁴¹ IV, 36, Dem.

⁴² IV, 40, 73, App. 14.

⁴³ IV, 37.

⁴⁴ III, 55, Sch.

ever an event contradicts the postulates of our private fancy we shall stay our mind on the sure working-out of that fundamental order which we as parts thereof implicitly follow.⁴⁵ To make sure of advancing steadily the degree of ethical freedom, we should adopt certain general rules, and committing them to memory apply them with confidence when sudden passion overtakes the soul. We conclude that character and freedom go hand in hand in the unfolding of individual purpose.⁴⁶

But we must not suppose that conduct is entitled to the name *character* only when directed to a so-called virtuous end. The fact that the characterizing process moves progressively forward, no matter how vaguely conscious we may be of its tendency, proves that the end is not voluntarily imposed by us, but belongs to the organic system. The end *qua* end is neither vicious nor virtuous; it is an element in the teleological series. Ethical judgments are devised by social experience, and are valuable as guides to action, not as interpreters of our nature. Thus, the thief has as much right as the honest man to claim a "good" for his character,—though we admit he cannot reach the unruffled repose of mind which springs alone from complete acquiescence in natural law.⁴⁷ His career is built within a consistent whole. His guiding principle is that all things are his, that he need not respect the sanctity of possession with which civil law has hedged the goods of his neighbor. If he conclude that committing crime is a sure way to obtain the better life, he would be recreant to his obligation as a being of unique purpose did he not follow that leading, even though it brought him to the gallows,—that too representing as clear a fulfilment of human desire as sitting by his own table.

Yet we must remember that no individual purpose, however commanding, can overcome the salient impulses common to all life. We cannot in our right mind crush the will to live. Hence, the criminal, sunk never so low in vice, always aims to work out the accepted program without endangering his organic continuity. He is obviously a prey to passion; for he develops his career solely through the avenues of sense, and with a view to

⁴⁵ IV, App. 32.

⁴⁶ V, 10, Sch.

⁴⁷ Epis. 23.

sensuous ends.⁴⁸ Still, behavior is not without a plan. The genius of intellect, his own by inherited equipment, has taught him how to use the forces about him for a malevolent purpose. He does not differ from the good man in mental power, but in temperament, in moral atmosphere, charged oftentimes with the venom of a definite objective. His character is a coherence of badness, because every reaction of body and every "idea" of mind answer to the same general tendency. Thus, in the man we are observing, love and hate, opposite dispositions, could not coexist. Hate has secured the ascendancy according to the well-known axiom that two contrary emotions in the same subject must undergo change, one or both, until they are at length entirely congruous.⁴⁹ That intuitive vision which makes us forget the world for love of truth can find no room here. The facts are plain; why they are *so*, and not *otherwise*, is a question which it is not competent for us to discuss. Out of the infinite number of moulds at nature's command we could never be sure which one was to be used,—until we saw the product. But the facts assure us that the systematizing of conduct goes on apace, on lower levels, as well as on the summits of wisdom, and that even in the conception of crime freedom has not disowned her sovereign claims. A man is as free to do evil as to do good.⁵⁰

But what shall we say of cases that seem to admit of exception? If a man suddenly drops his antipathy towards another, and begins to view him with affection; if a timid nature, at times almost craven in temper, is in a great emergency endowed with conquering courage; if a pious man yields his devotion for an instant under the whip of human cowardice;—must we conclude that the fabric of behavior has changed, and that an entirely new set of reactions has superseded the old? Again, if we find a manifest vacillation in the judgments of the agent under observation, his ethical actions being defined according to the momentary impressions of the senses,—shall we hold that the mind is a tissue of conflicting ideas, with no harmonizing principle?⁵¹ The conclusions already established point in another

⁴⁸ IV, 32.

⁵⁰ Epis. 23.

⁴⁹ V, Ax. i.

⁵¹ III, 51, Sch.

direction. The forces of body being integrated by a fundamental impulse, the system of ideas corresponding thereto cannot fail to have a common centre, which is expressed by Spinoza in the words: "The mind endeavors to conceive only such things as assert its power of activity."⁵² Hence, while in any particular character great divergence of motives may be found, still every act will have its place in the consistent scheme of behavior. Our embarrassment results from the necessarily incomplete view of the subjective scheme. If the intricate processes of thought were brought fully to light, we should not be constrained to charge our subject with incompatibility. Thus, Judas does not suddenly change his shape under stress of temptation. The enticements expressed in the query, "What will ye give me?" afford woefully meagre ground of accounting for an attitude which is superficially contrary to his habitual regard. Such ulterior motives as disappointment, pique, hope of personal preferment, are absent from the record. But even they could not explain his reversal of feeling. We are forced to wrap the traitorous act in the envelope of a coherent character,⁵³ and say, If we had known all there was to Judas, we should not have been surprised at his course. But this is only to acknowledge the operation of a law of character running evenly with the law of mechanism. In the latter, we affirm a thing *must* happen; in the former, we say *it should*. *Sollen* not *müssen* is the rule of conduct. We are obliged, not compelled to perform a certain act.

IV

We have described character as the differentiating element in human life. Men are not unlike because they are units in the social structure. To exist as separate bodies cannot of itself guaranty variety of form.⁵⁴ Men are different by reason of a particular unfolding of the Conatus. The kind of stimulus and the strength of emotional reaction vary, and with them the type

⁵² III, 54.

⁵³ Cf. Joachim's use of the same general idea of coherence,—"*Spinoza*," Bk. II. Appendix, sect. 8, etc.

⁵⁴ Cf. I, 17, Sch.

of character. We cannot therefore sit down and deliberately conceive a character which we at once proceed to reproduce in conduct. The elements which enter into the completed career are present already in the individual without our connivance. They wait to be unfolded. They cannot be gathered into a characterized system as by some kaleidoscopic movement. They come one by one to the surface. Hence, the process of making character is undated.⁵⁵ It does not at a certain point reach its zenith and then remain unalterable. It presents itself in the guise of a dialectic⁵⁶ which is ever moving towards the Absolute, *vis.*, a finished personality. Every synthetic adjustment is a signal for the setting up of new terms in the dialectical series. We begin in each instance with the sense of organic depression; that is the thesis; and we endeavor to the best of our ability to conceive things which exclude the existence of the enervating forces,—that is the antithesis.⁵⁷ The direction of the change is always from the passive to the active, from automatic reaction to a reflective guidance of behavior.⁵⁸ Hence, when the new synthesis appears, while it cannot once for all reject the moulding influence of outside bodies, it will yet be a little more sure of its own autonomy, that is to say, its power to shape behavior according to its individual purpose. Freedom obtains a new increment, and life broadens commensurately.

But progress as visualized in the dialectic is not achieved without effort. There are two situations which meet the agent, and in each of them his ethical strength will be sternly tested. The first of these concerns the fact of excess, evidence of which we found in certain phases of organic development. There excess crystallized into habit, and became the point of departure for new biological types. Here, one emotion, whose stimulus exceeds in intensity the body's resisting power, tends to a polarized state, the agent being changed into a man of one idea, the proponent of mental obsession.⁵⁹ Such a condition may be salutary, providing the right phases of underlying purpose are

⁵⁵ III, 8.⁵⁶ III, 1, Cor.⁵⁸ Cf. Brunschvicg. "Spinoza" pg. 103, etc. 1894.⁵⁷ III, 13.⁵⁹ IV, 6, 44.

emphasized.⁶⁰ But it may easily develop the most dangerous proclivities, as when the sybarite accepts the enticements of bodily pleasure, giving no thought to their ultimate effects nor reasoning out the relations of such sensations to the finer sensibilities of the mind.⁶¹ In this way the object of pleasure grows so absorbing in its fascination that although absent he regards it as present to his eyes, and even in sleep or delirium is not released from its thrall.⁶² How very difficult it is for the moral dialectic to proceed past this point, may readily be surmised.

Nevertheless, we cannot allow it to be permanently thwarted, in view of the serious social entanglements produced by such a character. For we may regard with pity or ridicule the lovelorn youth, as one sunk in a dream from which eventually, perhaps with bitter memories, he shall awake. The miserly or ambitious man, however, is of a different complexion. His acts affect the wellbeing of society, and interfere with its true development. Hence, he must if possible be disillusioned.⁶³ But how? The polarized impulse yields its hold with great reluctance. For instance, the proud man feeds his emotional gratification with the honeyed words of flatterer and parasite, and persistently avoids the company of judicious observers. For him there is a decided increase of power in the under-estimation of his contemporaries. Yet after all the complacency is superficial; it can be easily pricked. It is based on ignorance of the vital purposes, type-impulses of our nature. It is a negation of the true self. To remove such negation by the process of dialectics is the business of an Ethic.

We begin with the fact that the pleasure of pride is not un-mixed. It is accompanied by pain, for no being like ourselves can suffer injury without the mind's being disagreeably affected in its turn.⁶⁴ There is too an acknowledged feeling that if we carry the analysis far enough we must certainly discover elements of superiority in other men, which would seriously impair

⁶⁰ IV, 52.

⁶¹ Cf. V, 23, Sch.

⁶² IV, 44, Sch.

⁶³ IV, 44, Sch.

⁶⁴ III, 47.

our calculated serenity.⁶⁵ The thesis is plain, *viz.*, organic depression, and is flanked by its antithetical terms, a character guided by reason, able to correlate its varying judgments to the needs of a single purpose. The antithesis may take the form of an Example, a Pattern of beauty and grace, into which the experiences of uncounted generations are woven. This, while not the completed personality, is nevertheless for the moment an absolute, and in accordance with its demands the next ethical synthesis may be framed.⁶⁶ In the case before us the excess of self-love is met with a true statement of what the self is, and how it should be valued. When the dialectic of *Pride* is finished, we shall not by any means have reached the projected goal, but we shall have extinguished the autocratic excess of mere opinion, thereby proving the process to be strictly dialectical in form, since it definitely abandoned its starting-point. The first situation is solved by the realization of desire, which has its roots in reason. There all excess is excluded.⁶⁷

But the first situation is a variation of the second, which records the play of contradictory impulses, and waits upon the subject for decision. The ingrained habit and the stubborn trait of character yield only after the pressure of individual purpose has been strongly felt. Hence, there must be a struggle between what is and what in the nature of things ought to be. An aggravated case like *Pride* may not disclose the sharp issues and bitter contentions which are present in commoner experiences; but it confirms the primary axiom of conduct, that no step forward is taken without the annulment or change of one group of motives by an act of choice.⁶⁸ Conscious life is an arena. Stimulating forces conflict, and for a moment thwart the unity of organic action. Thereupon, fluctuations of mind appear, leading us to affirm now the first, again the second of two courses, and involving us always in an uncertainty of mood as to which way the balance will incline. Thus, if we conceive a resemblance between a person who has affected us disagreeably and one who has gained our affection, we shall regard the former

⁶⁵ III, 55, Sch.

⁶⁶ IV, Pref.

⁶⁷ IV, 61.

⁶⁸ V, Ax. i.

with mingled feelings of hate and love; and our attitude towards him will depend on which feeling is uppermost in mind at the moment.⁶⁹ Again, the fluctuation may spring from the fact that my regard for a particular object is met by another's manifest aversion from the same. Nature prompts me at once to ask what defect or antagonizing principle lies hidden in its form. If he shrank from it, why not I? Shall I inconsiderately accept what another man has rejected? Even the most ardent lover sustains an abatement of pleasure in face of a slight cast upon his beloved. A struggle, an indecisive interval impends, until one emotion asserts its superior power and wins the victory.⁷⁰ The experience is universal, and is part of the warp and woof of character. We cannot be men if we decline the gagé of battle. Problems of the most serious import press for settlement; they must be settled, or the unity of the organism is spent. Just what do the problems involve?

We shall examine the three groups of contradictory impulses which Spinoza adduces. First, one and the same desire is broken up into two forms, pure and impure. Let the desire be the primary lust for life, finding vent in the career of an avaricious man. As a fundamental purpose it is unmixed and rational. But when the love of goods, whose primary significance is their use for the support of life, degenerates into a love of goods for their own sake, it becomes impure. These two aspects are forced at times into opposition, as when a man in desperation casts his substance into the sea in order to avoid death. Nature's first law triumphs for a moment, but the character of the agent is unchanged. Inwoven qualities are not easily disentangled. The dialectic, stayed amid the tempests of the seas, begins again with redoubled energy as soon as land is reached. This is the story of a type-purpose versus individual character.⁷¹

The same contrast is at hand when one of the motives has entered the reflective consciousness. To take an example: Honor may be defined as gratification accompanied by the idea of our action as approved by others.⁷² It may be a pure emotion, a creditable desire,—hence an object of reasonable quest.

⁶⁹ III, 17 and Sch.

⁷⁰ III, 31 and C.

⁷¹ III, Def. Emot. xlviii.

⁷² III, Def. Emot. xxx.

Thus conceived it becomes the basis for all friendly relations between man and man, being guaranteed by the terms of moral obligation. But it is extremely easy to modify the reactive power of honor by a change in the stimulating medium. If for instance its strength be rooted in popular acclaim, as when the statesman strives by meretricious means to gain acceptance of his policies, then honor is an empty name, which can only be maintained by tickling the public's fancy through increasingly sensational devices, until at length men tire of their idol and transfer their affections to another.⁷³ Here again, the dialectic of character involves the passage from the impure to the pure form of impulse. Just so far as we are able to cultivate the attribute of honor without the interposition of transitory stimuli, just to that degree do we advance the dialectical process towards the final but unattainable term, an absolutely perfect self.

The second group of conflicting emotions includes debased forms of the same impulse. They are contrary not by nature, but by accidental property,—they draw in different directions.⁷⁴ Thus, avarice and luxury go back to the same source, *viz.*, self-love. Their expressions however are different, being the effects of varying stimuli. The particular stimulus, the glitter of gold, working for years upon plastic mind has rendered it almost exclusively responsive to itself, and not to another. Hence, the avaricious man refuses to disburse his funds for purposes of indulgence, though he does not decline to "gorge himself with food and drink at another's expense."⁷⁵ The dialectic here as before sets actual facts and ideal presentments in opposition. The antithetical term considers what the agent wishes his character to be; that is to say, what its natural tendency is. Only, in the conflict of impure desires the ideal can never be a proposition which we should venture to invite men generally to adopt. For if mankind should adopt the scheme of life inculcated by avarice, the very foundations upon which the scheme rests would be undermined. The inference is that the dialectic cannot stop with the framing of a bad ideal. It must eventually accept as

⁷³ IV, 37, Sch. i., 58.

⁷⁴ IV, Def. V.

⁷⁵ III, Def. Emot. xlviii.

its negating term the rule of reason, by which alone man can win his proper freedom.⁷⁶ Hence, in the last analysis, we get back to the contrast between the facts of sense and the facts of reason, whence the dialectic pursues its upward march unceasingly.

Still a third group of competitive desires confronts the student,—the largest and most conspicuous, the groundwork of every dialectic. Love and hate contend for mastery in every conscious life.⁷⁷ The phases of conflict are infinite, and every new juxtaposition establishes a new dialectical series. We select for examination the critical phase where the beloved turns the glance of indifference on her lover and bestows her affection on his rival. The pleasurable feeling is stayed; its power begins to recede. Reflective argument as to the former's ingratitude is not needed to account for the change.⁷⁸ Natural feeling cannot brook an unresponsive attitude. Jealousy and hate enter the conscious field, and the battle of emotions is joined. If the early love was deep and strong, it would not yield except under the greatest pressure; and if at any moment a glint of favor lights the eye of the beloved, it will kindle again its ancient ardor, extinguishing the incipient hate.⁷⁹ Thus, the warfare of contending impulse proceeds; thus the dialectic is developed; thus, too, the most tragic story in the field of consciousness is told. Every decision fits securely into the scheme of character, but at the same time opens up a new situation, which must in turn be resolved. That is to say, the quest upon which we have embarked is clearly without end, and the goal we conceive is forever approached, but never embraced.

V

Given the terms to the conflict, how shall its issue be determined? Spinoza adopts two general tests: First, is the cause of the reaction present or absent? Secondly, is the cause necessary or contingent?⁸⁰ The element of time is, we know, decisive as to the value of an impression. The image of a stimu-

⁷⁶ Cf. IV, 72.

⁷⁷ III, 13, Sch.

⁷⁸ IV, 41, Sch.

⁷⁹ III, 35, Sch.; V, 10 Sch.

⁸⁰ IV, 9, 11.

lating object remains present to the mind until displaced by another. If the image be of an object which we expect to enter consciousness at a later period, it is bound to be shadowed by others of present experience. Thus, hope may be defined as an inconstant pleasure, springing from the image of something future, the issue of which we do not as yet understand. Hope cannot be as strong as sight; we know what we see. For while we are ready to believe as true whatever hope reposes in, we are aware how quickly and effectively its objects have been shattered by the relentless argument of facts.⁸¹ If now the mind's grasp of a future event is fainter, it follows that desire for it is less acute. Hence, whenever a conflict of motives involves a disparity of time, other conditions being equal, the present cause will always lay its conquering hand upon the agent. He must choose it; even when he knows the good or evil, the favorable or unfavorable effects on his career, he must still choose it. It is beside the point to argue that reason determines the merits of a cause apart from its emergence in time.⁸² That is true, and its dictum exercises an increasingly large influence in the progress of the dialectic. But for the average man desires are gauged by their contact with environing forces. Hence, reasoned motives may be upset or dislodged by the intensity of reactions when the energy of body is palpably inferior to that of the stimulus. This is the general rule, verified in every moral contest. We have no assurance that because wisdom warns us to adopt a good which comes to fruition in the future, we can beat back the storm of passion, pressing at this moment on our reluctant sensibilities.⁸³

The other rule for determining the issue marks the distinction between the necessary and the contingent. Reaction to the idea of necessity and of existence is the same. Whatever we conceive to exist, exists for us, and makes its certain impression on the mind. Whatever we conceive as not existing, or as not having its causal nexus sufficiently clear, so as to be regarded as certain, cannot produce the reaction of an existent or present object. In the case of necessary causes the strength of the re-

⁸¹ III, 18, Sch. ii; 51, Sch.

⁸³ IV, 15, Dem.

⁸² IV, 62.

action is equal to that of an object present to consciousness, plus the fact that if the object be withdrawn from view its causal relations remain unchanged in the mind.⁸⁴ It appears, then, that contradictory emotions can be reconciled only by giving the necessary cause the right of way. Thus, if we cannot decide at once whether we should venerate or envy the man of prudence at our side, it is incumbent upon us to inquire if we ourselves do or can possess the same quality of mind. If not, then envy is not the necessary reaction, inasmuch as man can only envy his equal. Instead of that, we are moved to wonder; we are obliged to gaze upon, and admire, what is steadily denied to us, because of its very uniqueness. The mind is transfixed with its glow.⁸⁵ The decision in this and other cases may be reached after long and tedious experience; but the issue of the dialectic is sure, on the basis of the governing rule.

We have applied the two rules to conduct pursued in the common walks of life. They become more effective in the light of critical suggestion. The real significance of choice can be seen at this point. Choice is not a balancing of two possible courses and the ultimate appropriation of that one which commends itself to our fancy. Ethical purpose concerns only the good. Evil for it has no existence. The basic question is not, Shall we do this or that? but, *How* shall we do *this*? The difference between the two theories of moral conduct is the difference between the healthy man's and the sick man's attitude to food; one eats with evident relish; the other eats even obnoxious food, in order to elude the grip of death. That is to say, the purport of action is not a choice between good and evil in the first instance, but an affirmation of the fundamental purpose.⁸⁶ We are taught to value motives not by the comparative strength of their reactions, but by their relation to the general good of the system. For this reason the greater of two goods and the lesser of two evils should be accepted, because eventually the lesser evil will really prove to be a good, while the lesser good, by itself a valuable emotion, is, compared with its competitor, distinctly inferior as a means for developing the powers of body and mind.

⁸⁴ I, 33, Sch. i.

⁸⁵ III, 56, 52.

⁸⁶ IV, 63.

These facts convince us that the wise man alone pursues a satisfactory course, since he alone can detect what actions are of primary importance in life, and what can best further his individual purposes.⁸⁷

Hence at length we ask, as we note the progressive dialectic, What determines the issue in each particular contest? Not simply the rules just deduced; they are the framework, the categories, within which the organizing force works. Man's unique purpose moulds his conduct. It steals forth from its concealment with the widening intelligence of the actor. Reflection now evokes the very decisions which formerly were produced by the senses. But the basis of choice is different. Unchastened impulse chooses because it is near; reason, because the object is more akin to our character.⁸⁸ Consistency as the symbol of behavior grows more pronounced. Therefore, we may confidently predict the outcome of each new moral struggle,—not indeed in precise terms, for the causal series is teleological, not mechanical, and the subject may have a stratum of thought as yet unknown to us,—but as belonging to the characterized system whose terms we have watched unfolding one by one. Furthermore, we may be certain that in proportion as we exalt the "better part of our nature," which is man's unique purpose, over against the disorganizing impressions of sense, in that proportion shall we advance our degree of freedom, and despite our union with nature recognize our behavior as our own.⁸⁹

To this point has the quest for a character brought us. Can human freedom go beyond it?

⁸⁷ IV, 65, 66, C; Sch.

⁸⁹ IV, App. xxxi.

⁸⁸ IV, 59, 62.

CHAPTER IV

THE REALIZATION OF SELF

I. THE MEANING OF SELFHOOD

Man as we have hitherto described him is clearly the product of individuation. Even in the making of character he feels himself a creature of circumstance, in the sense that differences of disposition cannot account for his individual purposes. He may remove every reaction from the thought of an external cause, but he cannot free himself from its environment, or exclude once for all the gratifications of sense which such contact provokes. In other words, man though furnished with a character is still an individual, a part of nature, subject to the unceasing activity of her laws.

But if man be an individual acting in harmony with her movements, can he have any freedom beyond that belonging to the type-purposes of his kind? We have found him exercising the functions of organic life, free to move within its boundaries. Can he now by specializing his behavior discriminate also degrees of freedom among individuals? Is one man freer than another, the wise and just than the slave of vice? Again—passing to actual experience—can I determine what objects shall influence my conduct? Can I plan to forestall a possible reaction and if necessary evade it altogether? Do the facts of psychology prove that I, that any man is at liberty to differentiate the human mode of life from that of the lower organisms, adapting method to need by reflective intent, and giving infinitely varied expression of the very end which bird and insect pursue by the drive of instinct? Still further, can the possessor of reason note a continuous progress in his individual character answering to the terms of the logical dialectic, each conclusion registering a new level in the realization of man's unique purpose, and hence a new increment of freedom?

These questions we believe have been favorably answered. A man is free to develop the kind of character which belongs to his particular equipment, as over against every other individual in the human series. But we have not fully described our subject when we have dealt with him as a man amongst men, one of an infinite series. We must next deal with him as a man apart from men. He is not only conscious; he is conscious of self. In this new definition he reaches his true reality. Here by a process that eludes our grasp he enters the domain of intelligent reflection, having passed beyond the bounds of organic appetite. Here he is at home, so to speak, with his essence, discovers his affinity with men of like mind, and pursues his struggle towards the goal of complete self-realization.

I

Consciousness, we found Spinoza teaching,¹ is the organizing principle in the human body. It is not itself one of two reals, of both of which psychology must take account. There is only one substance, severally viewed, now as extension, again as thought. Every percept in the mind has its exact correlate in physical change. This point-to-point correspondence is rigid and invariable.

The structure of an organism is intact; it is a self-sustaining whole. It has properties which the mass of rock or the crystal fails to exhibit: its every organ reflects the operating principle of the whole. It reveals a definite tendency to remain in its established state, to maintain its organic integrity. Still again, it has a potential character; what an organism is in its early stages, is at times a mere shadow of what it will become. But whatever shapes or capacities it develops, are all involved and included in its primitive form, subject in their unfolding to the variety and degree of environing stimuli. And finally, organic life affirms its unity by an empirical test, *viz.*, by generating one or more beings precisely like itself and endowed with the same structural individuality.

So much for the body—can we say the same for the mind?

¹ Sup. pp. 43, *seq.*

The treatment of this question, though tainted with Rationalism, forestalls in a remarkable manner the conclusions of at least one school of modern experimenters. In Def. iii, Part II, Spinoza refers to the mind as a "thinking thing" (*res cogitans*), and betrays thereby the atmosphere he was forced to breathe. But even Locke, who broke up sensation into its residual bits, and Hume, who refused to find any causal connection between successive events, whether in mechanics or perception, could not get rid of the notion of a common background into whose recesses the various psychic phenomena inevitably retreated. Spinoza was much more logical. If causality rules in the world of matter, it rules forthwith in the world of thought. The sensations of body are determined thus and so by the laws of its structure. Hence, the images of mind corresponding thereto are not disconnected, and variable in movement, but parts of a steady current. If then the structure of an organism be a well-rounded whole, its functional imprints, even when as in the case of man they are infinitely diversified, must also be a unit.

At this point the author enters a reservation. We must be careful, he says, not to identify the body as a purposeful system with this particular object which maintains unceasingly the circulation of the blood. Death comes in other ways than by reducing the body to a cadaver. The inward proportion of motion and rest, that is to say, the nice adjustment of the mechanisms of the brain, may be so disturbed as to change completely the nature of the man. Thus, a Spanish poet on recovering from a serious illness was altogether isolated from his earlier mental experiences and "could not believe the plays and tragedies he had written to be his own." But for the fact that he remembered his mother tongue he would have been thrown into the state of intellectual infancy.² The reservation here so carefully made really transgresses the rule of organic unity which Spinoza himself has laid down, and in the light of modern research is not needed to support his theory.³ Multiple personality is at root

² IV, 39, Sch.

³ Cf. McDougall, *Body and Mind*, pg. 346, for an interpretation of the same phenomena from the standpoint of interactionism.

not a complex of two or more contending personalities within the same body, but one self in its divergent forms, which could—were they all known—be fitted into as harmonious a system as is the bodily organism which it expresses. For the difference of mental content is no more marked between these “selves” than between the intelligence of the child and the matured reason of the man. Indeed, as the author himself admits, the naive observer could be persuaded that he, too, had passed through childhood only by comparing the varying stages of life about him.⁴

It is difficult to study the development of consciousness in subhuman species. How far systematization has proceeded in each must be determined by the way in which behavior reflects the primordial impulses of the organism. With man the case stands otherwise. We now deal with mind, re-inforced by a new and more powerful impulse. Reflection, the new aspect of the correlating principle, reveals the same integrating tendency. If every organism by its self-preservative instinct is able to pick and choose amid the swarm of stimulating objects,—“understanding their points of agreement, difference and contrast,”⁵—certainly man with his critical powers is fitted to control his reactions with a view to his ultimate good.⁶ In other words, intellect is the ground of all rational life. It alone can define the purpose towards which human energies tend.⁷ It alone can impress upon us the value of courses which ultimately inure to the best development of body and mind.⁸ It is this impulse which keeps life steady amid conflicting currents, which counsels cordial submission to situations, whose grip we cannot break.⁹ Finally, it is reflection which shows us how to escape from the servitude of sense into the broad spaces of communion with total nature.¹⁰ That mind such as this can be other than an organized system, a conscious whole, is an inadmissible proposition.

But when we say that reflection organizes a system of ideas, we must not fall into the error which blighted the Cartesian

⁴ IV, 39, Sch.

⁵ II, 29, Sch.

⁶ IV, 23.

⁷ IV, App. v.

⁸ IV, 36.

⁹ IV, App. xxxii.

¹⁰ V, 25.

doctrine.¹¹ Intellect and will are not separate faculties within the soul,—concentric circles, each controlling absolutely its appropriate radii. Mental experience is atomic in the sense that percepts move as individual objects across the screen. It is not atomic, if by applying that term we rob perception of its genetic associates. It would be a travesty on the critical work of intelligence if concepts were framed by sporadic guesses or a chance alignment of sensory images. In other words, mind is just as far from being a congeries of unrelated sensations as it is from being the seat of certain compartment-tight faculties. Intelligence is an active principle, a governing force—*vis perseverandi*¹² that cuts its way through the mass of environing perceptions and makes ever more clear the path of man's autonomy.¹³ By virtue of this aggressive tendency, first of all, the mind is able to conceive the idea of its continuity. Sensation is the only ground of recollection; hence, we could never remember the phases of our pre-existence, supposing there has been any. The Cartesian theory of innate ideas, immediate presentations of the mind, is likewise inept; they need a guarantee, which the mind must furnish for them. But the rational impulse, the tendency of mind which turns images of sense into commanding concepts and in the person of the wise man evolves definite rules of action, this proves its power by its deeds. "We feel and know," exclaims Spinoza, "that we are eternal. . . . For the eyes of the mind, by which it sees and considers, constitute the demonstration." That is to say, the perpetual drive of intelligence in teaching a man how to construct logical methods and practical policies which make for his progressive development, carries with it a sure argument for its own integrity. Mind is not a succession of feelings, emerging for a moment above the threshold of experience and then disappearing; mind is the presentation of feelings in their due relations, which lower organisms cannot understand, but which man is permitted to examine from a new point of view.¹⁴ To this examination we now address ourselves.

¹¹ II, 49, Sch.

¹² II, 45, Sch.

¹³ V, 7.

¹⁴ V, 23 Sch.

II

Intelligence has been defined as the impulse which differentiates the human species from its neighbors. But man and brute are as organisms complete in themselves. Every animal has an individual career, and if he could discuss it we should find it truly balanced. But the very fact that he cannot discuss it, while man can, argues a profound cleavage between the two experiences. Man becomes conscious of a self; the dog, so far as we can judge, does not. Now if there be no specific faculty to prescribe action,¹⁵ no psychic warp into which sensory figures are woven, how are we to conceive the personal identity which we are accustomed to call the Self? "It is in the nature of reason," writes Spinoza, "to perceive things under a certain form of eternity."¹⁶ The *eternal* part of a perceived object is the element which it has in common with other objects of the same kind. Thus, it is essential to a triangle that the interior angles should be equal to two right angles. Take away that property and you destroy the triangularity of the figure. Hence whenever you see a triangle, you know the measure of its interior angles. And if you never see one, you are aware of the eternal validity of the law.¹⁷ For a thing is objectively real not alone when it is fixed by the coordinates of time and place, but just as surely when it is "contained in God," that is, is universal in application. The essence of a thing is what is true, whether it is seen or thought.¹⁸

Let us apply this to the case in point. Will as a definite faculty does not exist. The agent does not rise up at a crucial moment and exclaim, "I will to be a man." He is a man by virtue of the ceaseless operation of his intelligent impulse, which he did not by private volition inaugurate. Conscious life in the higher species is signalized by two facts, sense-perception and memory, which are not unique in man and cannot enter into definition of his self. Common opinion errs grossly in this connection. It identifies personality with a man's capacity for bodily reaction,

¹⁵ II, 48, Sch.¹⁷ II, 49.¹⁶ II, 44, C.¹⁸ V, 29, Sch.

which, it is assumed, will be continued in a future existence.¹⁹ But this is to misconceive the meaning of the self. If human nature consists solely in the concatenated sensations of body, we may indeed give man a "character," but we can never endow him with the authority of a person, the right to call his actions his own. The key to this age-long conundrum Spinoza seems to find in the notion of the Universal.²⁰ We must not stop with cataloguing sensory images, each as the "idea" of its corresponding reaction and together totalled as the mind. If the percept interprets the physical change and the object that produced it, surely it in turn may be subject to a like process, the interpretation being based upon a comparison of prior and succeeding percepts. Now the "Form" of the Aristotelian philosophy was the sum of universal elements which defined the object. The Form of the mind is the universal principle which alone can define or correlate every percept and concept that pass never so swiftly through it, even when the mind is sunk into sleep. In other words, Selfhood is the Universal at stake, not as one of the logical categories, for none of them fits; but as persistent fact of consciousness. That a man can compare his acts before and after a given moment and find in them similar elements, proclaims his conduct as raised above the automatic experience of the dog, which is dependent on a series of sensory images for his every attainment. That he can do so with unfailing regularity, growing at every stroke more settled in his individual independence, proves that the new "universal" is not a makeshift function, arbitrarily conceived and flourishing for a moment, but a permanent property of mind, as surely man's as is his impulse to preserve his being.²¹

The "eternity of body" which Spinoza delights to recite, becomes now a usable notion.²² It is not a theoretical concept, like those which the Scholastics constructed with infinite care and relish, in this case conspiring to bring against our author the

¹⁹ V, 34, Sch.

²⁰ Cf. Hobhouse, *Mind in Evolution*, pg. 321, for a similar view.

²¹ For this argument, cf. II, 13, 15, 22, 48, Sch., and 49, C. and Dem.

²² Cf. V, 22, 29 and Sch.

charge of being a Realist. It is a distinct and practical factor in psychology. If intellect were unable to conceive the functions of body in their general relations it would never be fit to reach any conclusions as to the nature and laws of natural forces. All knowledge is communicated by the avenues of sense.²³ If that knowledge be nothing but an array of perceptual images, the human observer would be as helpless as his brute companion to tell what these things meant. For we read that the sensory impression does not offer complete information as to the nature of the stimulating object,²⁴ and again, that each individual percept fails to reveal the powers of the sense excited, certainly not the compass of the body's powers.²⁵ The act of intellect which organizes percepts into a conceptual system is the first attempt in organic history to arrive at the meaning of sensation. Such a process must begin with the sensory organs and end with them, all our observations being colored by the media of transmission.²⁶ Hence, it is entirely proper to hold that the privilege of making and applying the categories of thought to experience in the world of mechanism belongs to the human mind, because it alone has learned to read the universal properties of sensation.²⁷ Hence, too, the Self which emerges from the flow of correlated ideas deals expressly with the eternal qualities whose visible embodiment is found in a given individual.

Let us not suppose, however, that Selfhood is a barren abstraction, like the justice of Nominalism, or the pale, ungrasped Noumenon of a later philosophy. The self, being inextricably bound up with life, the nidus of active forces, must faithfully register the movements of the body. Thus, the child begins his career by an unreasoned obedience to primary instincts, the satisfaction of which depends almost exclusively on external causes. He is scarcely conscious of himself or his surroundings. But in normal instances growth is steady and progressive. Mind unfolds along with the capacity of sense. Education sets it as the supreme end to "educer," to draw out the powers latent in the child's nature,—to train eye and ear and touch, relate their

²³ II, 26.²⁵ II, 27.²⁷ V, 29, Dem.²⁴ II, 25.²⁶ II, 17, Sch.

percepts to a common scheme of knowledge, and at length make the grown man an independent self.²⁸ Because in this or that body, at an early age, an intelligent whole is clearly defined, Spinoza has no trouble in ascribing to each body an "eternal" nature.²⁹ He must mean by that just one thing: that amid the crush and entanglement of sense-perceptions the self which catches up the common element in each percept sees also the meaning of the act, finds this fitting harmoniously into a scheme of conduct, and relates all acts at length to a definite end. Thus intellect makes good its superiority to imagination and memory, both of which have a place in all organic experience without being correlated under the principle of a presiding self.³⁰ And it makes good its superiority by defining the residual scope of sense-perception. The self, in other words, is not concerned ultimately with the gratification of sense, but with the cordial participation in those high thoughts which link man's destiny with the destiny of the world.³¹ This is Spinoza's doctrine of personality. Let us proceed to a closer examination of its terms.

III

The awakening of selfhood is not a sudden attainment. Those who have arrived at a mature estimate of themselves know at what great cost the goal has been won. The growth of self-distinguishing thought is just as regular and just as slow as the growth of a bodily organ. Certain organic instincts like the sex-impulse do not assert their power until the body has reached a fixed development; yet all the previous life has been training-ground for their particular function. Likewise, the first glint of self-consciousness appears at a recognized period, the exact moment however being beyond the ken of the observer. But when physical impulse or mental discrimination emerges, it marks a new stage in the individual's career. It is, as Spinoza says, a new perfection, a new level of reality.³² It would be a faulty reading of the values of intellect, to study them only in the developed consciousness of the grown man. The mind is an

²⁸ V, 39, Sch.

²⁹ V, 22.

³⁰ V, 40, C.

³¹ V, 20, Sch.

³² IV, Pref.

enlarging vista, so to speak. We must study it from its beginning. If we would "better understand and more easily explain it," we should consider its form when it had just caught the first swift, startling glimpse of universal properties,—the mind's unique privilege. The initial perfection of selfhood is registered here. The meaning of "eternity" is for the first time articulately framed.³³ The infant mind possesses a reality quite its own. It would be an assumption of defect in nature to pity the child because in his tender years speech and reason and logical insight are denied. His primitive gains are the certificate of a larger reality yet to be unfolded. Given health, and length of days, he will assume the graduated perfections of human life,—adulthood, youth, manly vigor and the wisdom of age. Potentially, the last is included in the first; hence the essence of the individual never changes, though the power of action develops. Hence, too, the freedom of the adult self is amply guaranteed, because we have carried our knowledge of its real capacity back to its primary expression.³⁴

Having taken our stand at the fountain-head of a man's career, what do we find to be the germinal marks of the conscious Self? There can be no doubt as to the *fact* of self-consciousness. Whatever the origin of his experience, a man is sure that is he himself, an identical person, who sees and hears and understands. Uncritical opinion endows him with an untrammelled initiative, so that his every act is held to be the output of free deliberation.³⁵ The mistake lies in the definition of freedom. The intellect is free in precisely the same way as any other organic impulse; it is free to realize its purpose.³⁶ Hence, we cannot understand the scope of man's freedom until we ascertain how the particular impulse which makes him a man, comes to its focus.

The self does not become conscious by the registering of a sensory image. True, the percept corresponding point by point with the changes of body is not an inert something, unresponsive like a picture on a panel. It surges with life, with the energy of organic growth. It involves an active endeavor in the direc-

³³ V, 31, Sch.

³⁴ V, 6, Sch.

³⁵ III, 2, Sch.

³⁶ IV, 26.

tion of the object perceived. It is the work of a mind which is able to correlate its several tendencies by one commanding principle, but which must first gather up the data for the intellectual principle to set its impress upon. This means that the mind is sure of the thing as well as of the sensory image, but only in the same way as the mind of the child is sure of the cause of its motor-reflexes, or the mind of a dog of the object of its memory-impressions. The judgment is purely perceptual.³⁷ As a judgment of sense it is unqualifiedly true, and no observer can dispute it. But as a judgment of ultimate fact it is open to a hundred objections, and can be justified solely by applying the next function in the critical operation of mind, *viz.*, that of comparison.³⁸ Hence, getting an "idea" exactly agreeable to its stimulating object can never be a test of selfhood; but getting the habit of relating such "ideas" to a common principle sets a man on the way to winning his intellectual autonomy, the power to identify experience as his own.

"Modes of thinking such as love and desire can have no objective validity unless there be in the individual an idea of the thing loved or desired."³⁹ By this Axiom two elements are required for the complex of consciousness, the instinctive nature of the agent and the image of a stimulating object. But if we stopped there, the psychic experience of dog or man would be hopelessly monotonous. It would not be experience, it would be a succession of reactive points. But experience never stops there; the aggressive nature of the organism makes a halt impossible. In a twinkling of an eye there will be two conscious events. So far as we are at liberty to guess, for the dog each event will be related to its successor as structural neighbors in the nerve tract,—hence as necessary constituents of memory.⁴⁰ For the man the relation becomes unique. For example, one stimulus produces pain, another pleasure. The dog winces and barks; the man by his superior impulse notes the change from one level of feeling to another. Pain to him is evil, and he avoids its cause. Pleasure is good, and he cultivates every occasion that

³⁷ II, 43, Sch.

³⁸ Cf. IV, i, Sch.

³⁹ II, Ax. 3.

⁴⁰ II, 18, Sch.

can create it.⁴¹ Intellect thus carries us away from the succession of sensory shocks to the thing which is common to all. "We know nothing to be certainly good save such things as really conduce to understanding."⁴² That is to say, the moment I can declare that two experiences have in common the physical condition known as gratification, that moment I have said, in germ if not in term, that I who register these feelings am an identical person.

The essence or self of man now rises permanently above the surface. He is no longer the sport of unresisted reactions.⁴³ He can catalogue, he can categorize them; he can arrange them in an intellectual order.⁴⁴ He can call them his own, and by studying their effect upon his feelings, trace them to their cause. Hence, the freedom of the awakened child is a thousand-fold greater than the freedom of the most powerful animal, just because he has begun in never so rudimentary a way to ascertain what is good for him. For of all the conscious organisms in the world, the human mind alone is able to hold before its grasp in a definitive manner the end to be sought. The second element, then, in the correlation of Self is a comparing of experience with a purpose in view. But that purpose cannot be subserved by conformity to emotional instincts. If that were so, man after all would have in his career nothing unique. But he has something distinctive; he can think, frame concepts, assess the value of sensations. If his self-conscious thought be not devoted to the husbanding of his intellectual resources, he has defaulted his peculiar purpose and stripped himself of his rightful heritage.⁴⁵ In order that this may not happen we endeavor to cause the child to think for himself, to prescribe such teleological formulas as will at length make him master of his career. This is the business of education. When mastery is attained, whether at the start or in the mature triumphs of will, the self will discover a feeling of elation called self-approval, the knowledge that we have seen the multiplicity of sense-perceptions in their true light.⁴⁶

⁴¹ IV, 8, 19.

⁴² IV, 27.

⁴³ IV, 23.

⁴⁴ V, 10.

⁴⁵ IV, App. 5.

⁴⁶ IV, 52; V, 39, Sch.

But if the Self conceives a definite goal, what assurance have we that when it is reached it can be suitably identified as the self's own? The answer to this question will reveal a third aspect of self-consciousness, *viz.*, its continuity. If we were dealing with the modes of characterization which we discussed in a previous chapter, we should despair of ever ascribing to them the logical category of sameness. They are not the same; the individual changes with every breath he draws, and this very changefulness limits his freedom to the type-purposes which crown his life. Selfhood, however, is not measured by the co-ordinates of space and time, but by the essence belonging to the individual organism in every phase of its growth.⁴⁷ In the sphere of intellect the *real* element is the principle of selfhood, which binds all sensory experience into a unity. The self is forced to stand over against the mass of characterized emotions; *they* are the tokens of appearance, *it* is the essence of man. The distinction is fundamental to Spinoza's psychology and shows how deeply he entered into the practical life of the race.

Communications of sense are never reliable. They reflect, as we have seen, the momentary attitude of the percipient. Thus, if I affirm that the sun is two hundred feet away from my point of vision, I am giving only the apparent measure. All objects more than two hundred feet away *seem* to us removed an equal distance, and all in the same plane. The distance from earth to sun is not a subject of perceptual judgment; it exceeds our powers and is to be determined by computation. Not the casual observer, but the skilled scientist must reckon up orbit and parallax and set down the exact result.⁴⁸

Now it is this observing self, the self that is carried along from one observation to another and from one group of mathematical figures to another,—it is this continuous self which possesses reality. We must be extremely careful not to confuse it with the individual at a particular moment of his career. If we do, we break the continuity and destroy the principle of union. Hence, the self should never be invested with such relative terms as good or bad. They belong to man as an individual, not as a

⁴⁷ V, 23, Sch.

⁴⁸ IV, Def. vi, Remark; I, Sch.

"thinking mode," universalizing the judgments of sense. Even on the level of commonplace reactions the terms are variable in value. For example, music is good for the victim of melancholia, bad for the soul sunk in grief, and of no worth whatsoever to a man bereft of hearing. In so far as these terms refer to the condition of body there is a manifest propriety in using them; but when applied to the correlated experience of the self they lose their meaning. For the self does not deal with the body as temporarily affected, but with its essential powers. Yet while we may not bring the specific differentials of feeling to the contemplation of self, we may fittingly frame a type (exemplar) of character composed of qualities which the self has distilled from its contact with nature, or by an analysis of its own thought, and set it before our eyes as the self's crystallized objective, the guarantor of ultimate freedom.⁴⁹ To reach it, the consciousness of self must grow increasingly acute; the conceiving subject must ever more vigorously discriminate the objects of its thought from itself and hold its own by choice and initiative in face of the clamorous demands of sense-perception. That is to say, a struggle must ensue, parallel to that which we have designated as the emotional dialectic. There it was an individual impulse that provoked the contest; here intelligence, man's unique purpose, seeks the steady formulation of all impulses into a self.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ IV, Pref.

⁵⁰ Cf. V, 31, Sch. and 40.

CHAPTER V

THE REALIZATION OF SELF

2. THE MODE OF DEVELOPMENT

The dialectic of self-realization may be said to have three phases, the first psychological, the development of man as a separate self; the second ethical, his contact with other selves; the last religious, his relations to the universal idea of nature. These three phases are not mutually exclusive. Type of civilization, immediate environment, physical capacity, peculiar genius may strangely mingle and confuse the several forms of mental life; but whether mingled or consecutive we shall not mistake in marking them as Spinoza's landing-places in the progressive attainment of selfhood.

I

The initial duty of the conscious self is to study the meaning of the body's reactions, with a view to making them serve the self's best interests.¹ The meaning of every reaction, as we have noted, is gauged in part by the nature of the stimulating object; but only in part, inasmuch as no single image can carry a complete summary of the parts and relations of the object mirrored.² We must effect a comparison of several reactions either to the same or related stimuli. The rudimentary act which awoke the consciousness of self is thus the prototype of the settled practice of reflection. Each sensation must be carefully examined for its general properties.³ Why did this impulse suddenly function, what was the nature of the stimulating cause, under what circumstances will a given stimulus provoke its response,—these and similar questions are the burden of study. Just as soon as we embark on this process we begin to gain "adequate ideas," we begin to understand.⁴ By the same operation, too, we

¹ IV, 53, Dem.

² V, 4.

³ II, 25; cf. IV, 5.

⁴ IV, 23.

enter upon a new level of freedom. When intelligence first wrought its impressions into the integument of a self, man won his right to a higher freedom than the mere functional activity of the lower organisms. Now he is in position to determine the cause of his sensory experience and at his own option "perform those actions which he knows to be of the highest value in life." He has reached the second form of knowledge, sharply distinguished by Spinoza from the first form, or opinion, which accepts the casual percepts as sufficient witness and never asks whether the concept deduced is universally true. Opinion may at times hit upon the correct solution to a problem, as when a tradesman by habit or early training puts down on paper the fourth proportional without knowing *why* it is the true figure. But the universal value of the solution can only be reached when, like the mathematician acting on the basic law of proportion, we understand that the product of the extremes equals the product of the means.⁵ All which means to imply that the ignorant man, following his opinion or the crystallized habit of society, is a slave, as compared with the man who boldly acts with a full knowledge of impending results.⁶

That the first assertion of self-consciousness is not immediately attended by such an access of freedom, is proven by a variety of facts.⁷ We may cite the edict of reflection that all events in the life of man are necessary. Much of the mental suffering of the world would be averted if we knew that the object lost could not by any device have been preserved.⁸ The customary reaction to loss is pain,—severe disappointment, bitter complaint, and a tendency to query how with an assumed benevolent Creator things have grown "corrupt to the point of putrescence, repulsive deformity, confusion, evil and sin." In answer to this it is not difficult to show that the perfection of things depends on their nature and their relation to the totality of being, and that they are not more or less perfect according as the individual observer finds them grateful or repugnant to his

⁵ Cf. De Emend. Intel., pg. 9.

⁶ V, 6 and Sch.

⁷ IV, 56, Sch.

⁸ Cf. Spinoza's complaint in IV, 35, Sch.

tastes.⁹ Pain itself, though it takes its meaning from organic properties and not from the laws of mechanism, must yet have its place in the necessary operation of natural forces. It is not a stranger, drawn into the pleasurable movements of the world; it is here by right; it has a distinct service to perform. When so viewed the offices of pain—disease of body, disorders of mind, poverty, injustice, war, hidden and malefic craft—are divested of their obnoxious garb. They are not the creatures of man's unaided whim; they are not contingent, nor can they be averted; they are necessary. Their universal meaning becomes sun-clear to the mind, their causes defined, and their issues foreseen.¹⁰ Hence, pain as a psychic reaction is at once turned into pleasure, and the idea that God could be the Author of evil is forever banished.¹¹

A similar change of attitude takes place in our view of evil which has overtaken another being conceived to be like ourselves. The common reaction is called Pity, and assumes that if circumstances had been different, joy and not misery would have crowned his life. On nearer consideration, however, it appears that the impulse of pity cannot be embodied in rational conduct. Pity implies that something is wrong with the structure of the world; that certain events might and should have happened otherwise. Reflection, on the other hand, having gathered up the essential properties of given objects, assures us peremptorily that all events transpire according to a fixed law of succession. There is nothing accidental; what appears so is the deduction of an unfurnished mind. Pity, therefore, has no point at which it may crystallize.¹² Nor is this all. The effect of such reaction upon the mind is distinctly bad. It not only forces upon us a feeling of depression because we conceive the object of pity as in a state of anguish,¹³ but it leads us to actions which afterwards we have grave cause to regret. Every impulse that bids us help another is emphatically the voice of reason and has official standing in the career of the Self.¹⁴ Yet it may be misguided either by the natural rush of emotion or by the fact

⁹ I, App., sub fin.

¹¹ V, 18, Sch.

¹³ III, 27.

¹⁰ Cf. I, 33 and Sch. i.

¹² IV, 50, and Sch.

¹⁴ IV, 37.

that we are easily deceived by false tears. The man who would conform to the terms of genuine sympathy must be careful to analyze both the character of his sentiments and the external incident which evoked them at the particular moment. If he fails to do so, the pain of pity will be re-inforced by the pain of chagrin, and the development of the real Self will be measurably hindered.¹⁵

Again, the reaction of Fear is driven by reflection from its prominent place in the emotional history of man. Instinct leads every organism to seek escape from danger or to avoid its very appearance. The wise man, that is to say, the agent who has balanced his impulse and action so as to realize the highest values of selfhood, will not scruple to decline the path of peril; for it is perfectly apparent to him that foolhardiness, being a destructive impulse, ranks on an equality with the sense of danger as respects its emotional results. Both bear the seeds of pain.¹⁶ Hence, to decline danger is not in his case to evince fear. Fear may be defined as a "wavering pain elicited by the idea of an event past or future of whose issue we stand in doubt."¹⁷ But uncertainty will not linger in a mind which has grown accustomed to correlating all its reactions under the rubric of a Self. It knows not by instinct, but as the reasoned result of experience, that fear may be conquered by anticipating and examining its causes, and by devising certain rules of conduct to be resolutely applied in times of need. Selfhood for the moment is synonymous with courage.¹⁸

The thought of death institutes the most violent reaction of fear in the uninstructed mind. We have remarked¹⁹ that the sick man who has never studied the meaning of physical dissolution undergoes cheerfully the most distasteful treatment for the sake of avoiding its issues.²⁰ He is a slave to the life of sense. On the other hand the free man, understanding *how* such dissolution takes place and *why*, is not concerned with the fact itself, but with the kind of a Self that shall have been realized

¹⁵ IV, 50, Sch.

¹⁶ IV, 69.

¹⁷ III, Def. Emots. xiii.

¹⁸ IV, 47, Sch.; V, 10, Sch.

¹⁹ Page 56.

²⁰ IV, 63, Sch.

when Death at length comes.²¹ For death as a biological fact is hurtful only when we have failed to seize every opportunity for developing the powers inherent in mind. Common opinion regards the death of a child as the cause of much unhappiness, and hails every man as the beneficiary of fortune if long life *cum sana mente in corpore sano* be granted him. But length of days is not the true test of the self's efficiency. If infancy excludes the principle of correlation as a mental attainment, old age often reveals its decisive impairment. Moreover, one man whose life is measured by a short span may have reached a far richer acquaintance with the meaning of his emotional contacts than another who at the turn of fourscore years is still the servant of organic appetite.²² To define clearly the purpose of our career, and to determine how every sensory impression and the conceptual judgment that results can ultimately subserve that end,—this alone will abolish the reaction of fear in face of death.

We thus reach the verdict that in the broader sphere of self-realization as well as in the primary act of self-consciousness it is necessary to have a definite idea of the end-in-view. Under what terms does Spinoza conceive it? The endeavor of every organism is the maintenance of its integrity. So long as the endeavor deals with the processes of body it is entirely instinctive. The end is recognized after the functions of the bodily organs have been discharged. A new aspect of the end-in-view appears when the correlating principle of mind begins the formation of a Self. The Self *looks* to an end, in the course of time constructs for it a precise background, and eventually makes a consistent effort to realize it. The difference between *end-in-view* for man and *end* for animal is abysmal. It celebrates the sweep of freedom which has come to conscious life. Man is not only free to follow his organic purpose; he is free to frame a line of conduct that shall bring his intellectual powers to their highest development.²³

The complete end of self, we submit, can never be fulfilled; it is a limiting concept. Yet we should carefully state it, so as to

²¹ IV, 67.

²³ Cf. IV, 26; V, 25.

²² V, 38 and Sch.; 39, Sch.

have a standard of comparison. Scientific pedagogy recognizes a concrete terminus ad quem, *viz.*, the training of the child's nature so that his sensory experience shall be as wide and complex as possible, and his mental grasp all-inclusive.²⁴ Such an ideal stands as the goal of every career. It reduces to a minimum the undisputed play of percept and image-association, and exalts the authority of intellect over both through the detection of governing laws. If the agent could rise to a perfect understanding of himself and the world he would lay hold upon the third and most effective type of knowledge, Intuition, the ability to see a thing *auf einem Blicke*, as Fichte says.²⁵ Yet even though we cannot reach the goal we are involved in an increasingly energetic struggle in its direction. Every new reaction is an opportunity for testing the value of the ideal, and at the same time each successive interpretation of the single reaction makes the ideal clearer to the eye.²⁶

But the self-purpose does not remain submerged in the necessarily shadowy terms of a limiting concept. It is not merely a hope; it is a present power.²⁷ Self-consciousness grows like the organism it interprets; and just as the organic functions never have a chance to display their full possibilities, so the self never reaches the pinnacle of its maturity. Nevertheless, whatever its stage of development, it is continually absorbing the common elements of its environment, which alone insure both the understanding and the attainment of the Good.²⁸

Of no other contact is this so inevitably true as in man's reaction upon his fellows. We have found that a mind does not wait for the touch and friction of other minds in order to become aware of its self-correlating tendency. The awaking of self is distinctly a private concern. Still the values which very early in life we begin to associate with the self are powerfully brought to sight through the appreciation of the points held in common with other selves. Hence, Spinoza is justified in his contention that a "man can neither be nor be conceived without

²⁴ V, 39, Sch.

²⁷ V, 20, Sch.

²⁸ IV, 31.

²⁵ Wissenschaftslehre, 1801, Teil. I, sect. 1.

²⁶ Cf. V, 40.

the power of taking delight in the highest good" of mankind in general.²⁹ The simple biological fact affords sufficient basis for the remark; for man comes into existence by the laws of physical generation; he is not dropped full-grown from the skies. The verdict of psychology is every bit as clear: Deny man a companion, and you make it impossible for him to unfold the idea of self, which the first glint of consciousness has disclosed.

How comprehensive a rôle in human life this reaction plays may be discerned by studying a familiar reaction to social stimuli. Pride is defined as a man's love of self, which puts too high an estimate on his own powers.³⁰ Now except as a theoretical concept, pride can have no standing in the history of mind apart from empirical contact with other minds. Pride in this sense becomes a pleasurable emotion issuing from a false opinion which affirms one man's superiority to his neighbor.³¹ If the way were open and we took the trouble to find it, we might learn both the state of our own mind and the approximate capacity of our neighbor's; a comparison of which would give the exact degree of difference and eliminate every emotion save that of gratitude for our united attainments, however little they might be. Thus the sensory contact, producing in the framing of character a homogeneity of impressions, that is, an *opinion*, effects now a reference of current experiences to the end-in-view, the building of a Self whose properties are shared by every other being of the same grade. Human behavior is not restricted to the response excited by inanimate nature or the motions of the subordinate organisms. If it were, the area of thought would be small, and the texture of language extremely rudimentary. That man may slowly but surely ascend in "his enjoyment of his rational life" is due solely to the impact of other reflective minds upon his own.³² The Self is therefore not a whole *sine flexu*, but a swirling current within whose bounds a thousand human tributaries are incessantly mingling. And the destiny of the Self, being common to the race, is illuminated by the triumphs of reason and skill, gleaming from the history of other gener-

²⁹ IV, 36, Sch.

³⁰ III, Def. Emots. xxviii.

³¹ IV, 57, Sch.

³² IV, App. 9.

ations and full of promise for our own impending achievements.³³

Such being the terminus of the dialectic of self-realization, what, we ask, are the notes of progress in the ascending series? We observe at once that proficiency in *recognizing* an object indicates the grade of self-discrimination. A given manifold (to use the vernacular of a later school), say, a flower, is framed by the triplicate action of sight and smell and touch and is then analyzed into its specific categorical qualities. This is what Spinoza terms the capacity for "understanding many things simultaneously."³⁴ The image of the flower, the flower-concept, becomes fixed in the observer's consciousness by repeated contact with its various embodiments, and in many a life plays a conspicuous part as the subject of phrase and fancy.³⁵ That is to say, recognition is not alone recognition of the objective data; it is a tacit, as yet inarticulate affirmation of Selfhood.³⁶ It enables the agent to separate his emotional inclination, *e.g.*, admiration for flowers, from the thought of an external cause, *e.g.*, the particular rose, and range it among the tried and proven aesthetic judgments of the race.³⁷ Such an emotion grows stronger with the widening of aesthetic experience, or as Spinoza says, "in proportion to the number of simultaneous concurrent causes exciting it."³⁸ And every access of strength to the judgment renders the agent more convinced both of his authority as a conceptual thinker, and of his selective freedom amid the mass of unrelated reactions.

Not different in principle but exceedingly more intricate in structure is the scheme of conduct, which coordinates spasmodic feelings under a common rubric. Conduct proceeds upon a precarious basis if we act only in order to escape an ill. Conduct must be positive; it must aim at a good.³⁹ What, for instance, should be our attitude towards Fame? Construing it negatively, we might cite its misuse, its vanity, the perfidious applause of the crowd. That is the view of the disappointed

³³ Cf. V, 20, Sch.

³⁶ Cf. V, 29, Dem.

²¹ V, 8.

³⁴ IV, 45, Sch.

³⁷ V, 4, Sch.

³⁹ IV, 63, Cor.

³⁵ Cf. V, 11.

candidate, who flaunts it in the face of his contemporaries as evidence of his searching knowledge of the world. But the issue of his invective proves how meagrely he understands the progress of his spiritual dialectic. For in his case each separate quest for fame is a reaction to an ephemeral stimulus; it is not coordinated to any intelligible rule of action; it is merely the output of sensuous impulse. Hence, ambition cannot remain a permanent factor in his career; it will be superseded by vehement anger, malicious insinuation, and ultimate despair. The proper values of selfhood are miserably obscured.

Profoundly antagonistic to this attitude is the course of the man who attempts to correlate kindred reactions into a definite scheme of conduct. The many and varied occasions leading to the pursuit of fame are interpreted by a single aim. In that way alone can he assert his primordial right and deepen his consciousness of freedom.⁴⁰ Therefore, he is careful to estimate the psychological uses of fame, the objects of quest, and the proper means for procuring them, and to assess the value of each new experience on the basis of that judgment. If the currents of life be conflicting or the principle of selfhood as yet ineffectually applied, he may turn the abstract rule into a group of precepts, commit them to memory, and in the event of an emergency summon them to hand one by one for instant service. Thus, recognizing an emotion will be the same as recognizing the presence of self; the keener and more comprehensive the reaction, the greater our progress in understanding the fundamental purpose of mind.⁴¹

A second note of progress is found in the self's relation to Time. Mind by its very nature must grow. If it halt, if it stagnate, selfhood is obscured and may become extinct. Idiocy is not the equivalent of personality. Now growth requires time. Hence, the development of self must be reckoned among the phenomena of a temporal experience. Nevertheless, man as a person is not in time in the same way that man as an individual is. The individual varies from moment to moment; the self abides the same, being the correlating principle which alone ex-

⁴⁰ V, 9.

⁴¹ V, 10, Sch.

plains the otherwise disjointed and unmeaning organic events. The self is always present, the permanent repository of all those properties that go to the making of a man.⁴²

That it is the same continuous self which coordinates utterly diverse reactions is a matter of record. In an unreflective period of life, *e.g.*, childhood, impulse asks for immediate satisfaction and will not take denial. If of two goods desired both be future, the one nearer in time, whatever its possible issues, will be persistently sought. Even though the issues of a future good be fully known, it will be arbitrarily sidetracked in favor of an object whose charms are exercising their momentary spell.⁴³ These are facts persuasive at once to youth, manhood and old age. They affirm inevitably the degree of freedom won or lost. They also forecast the difficulties attending the self's struggle to unfold its virtues. So long as sensuous impressions shape their career, men are the abject servants of Time. But when the awaking mind correlates events present, past and future under some common schedule of conduct, then the freedom of selfhood begins to emerge. Thus, the value of a good depends not on the moment of its enjoyment, but upon its essential character. If the present gratifications be agreeable while the remote effects are subversive of bodily health, the calculus of reflective psychology waives the element of time and pronounces the course contrary to nature. That is to say, we seek the greater good of the future in preference to the lesser good of the present, or a lesser evil of the present which leads to a definite good of the future; because the interests of self prescribe not an isolated pleasure here and there but a sustained and ultimate benison, known as harmony of mind.⁴⁴ The progress of self, it follows from this, proceeds by time-obliterating steps and clinches its indigenous powers by subduing refractory emotions to the settled scheme of life.⁴⁵

Yet just here a caution must be entered. For unreflective behavior often reveals an apparent observance of the same law, *vis.*, denial of present good for the sake of future reward. Thus,

⁴² Cf. V, 7, Dem.

⁴³ IV, 9, 10, 16.

⁴⁴ IV, 60, Cor.: 62; 76 and Cor.

⁴⁵ V, 7, Dem.

many men believe that piety and religion are burdens to be resolutely borne, in order either to escape horrible penalties after death or to gain celestial emoluments of service. They balance present evils against future good or greater future ills. Time is insidiously eliminated from the account and a calculus of good effected. The error is due to a defective psychology. The mind is subject to development only as an interpretation of the body's reactions. Hence, conditions after death cannot be compared with experience in life. If superstitious believers were deprived of this comparison, they would see no incentive in the doctrine of rewards and would return precipitately to their own lusts. For the driving force with them is not the harmonious unfolding of natural powers. They are as illogical in their attitude as one who proposed to abandon the rational life altogether in case he found the mind to cease at the body's dissolution. The true standard of judgment is not an ideal furnished by another world. It must be expressed in empirical terms or not at all. To balance real evils against a purely hypothetical good is unscientific and proves that unreflecting fancy has copied the rule of reason in vain.⁴⁶

The third mark of progress lies in the gratification incident to each advance in the self's control of its experience. We must observe the psychological order of events,—followed in Spinoza's "Ethics" as strictly as in the most systematic modern handbook. The organic impulse, developing as emotion in the higher life of man, reacts upon its environment, correlates its mental impressions and records a change in the actual state (perfectio) of body. The value of the change he terms pleasure.⁴⁷ Just as the whole body acts in the functioning of any appetite, so the whole self undergoes change with every correlated response.⁴⁸ If then we would learn whether the self is becoming properly conscious of its powers, we must consult the kind and degree of exhilaration following upon the heels of a given reaction. "Joy," says the author, "arises from the true apprehension of our virtues and their causes."⁴⁹ Change of feel-

⁴⁶ V, 41, Sch.

⁴⁷ III, 53; Def. Emot. ii.

⁴⁸ IV, 60.

⁴⁹ V, 10, Sch.

ing is instinctively associated with the idea of personal proprietorship. It is we who change; it is we who contemplate the change and are able to calculate its differentials.⁵⁰ Hence, it is we who can tell, sometimes in precise terms, how substantial is the progress effected by a rare experience.⁵¹ We have noted the diversity between the pleasures of sensual indulgence and the elation of philosophic thought.⁵² That was a comparison in the career of individuals. Here we study the conquests of growing personality. If the understanding becomes distinct in proportion to our ability to categorize experience and gradually do away with the confirmatory evidence of sense,⁵³ surely the agent's "joy" must needs register a parallel advance. Thus, the geometer who takes delight in drawing figures moves a definite pace forward when he ascertains, say, the principle of a circle, that if two straight lines intersect within it the rectangles formed by their segments will be equal to one another. He will advance another step in mental satisfaction when he grasps the fact that the principle cited is objectively true whether the actual figure be traced or not. A supreme joy will gird his soul if out of such a splendid principle a great discovery like the law of gravitation should issue.⁵⁴ In every case the gratification is not an impersonal event, shut off from the currents of life by abstract interpretation. It is "accompanied by the idea of the agent and his virtue," a sure result of the functioning of self-purpose. It foreshadows the limiting concept, which stands at the end of the intellectual dialectic and is called by Spinoza "blessedness," the highest possible contentment.⁵⁵

A practical test of the degree of gratification reached is found in the exclusion of excess from the course of self-realization. Excess means the disturbance of the organic equilibrium by an over-emphasis on one feeling. For instance, derision is the form of laughter which selects and pillories a moral quality which we despise in an object which we hate.⁵⁶ The generic impulse,

⁵⁰ III, Def. Emot. xxv.

⁵² Cf. sup. pg. 52.

⁵¹ IV, App. xxxi.

⁵³ II, 13, Sch.

⁵⁴ Cf. II, 8, Sch., for illustration in a totally different setting.

⁵⁵ V, 27, Dem.

⁵⁶ III, Def. Emot. xi.

laughter, being an offshoot of cheerfulness, is symptomatic of a healthy body and a sound mind and should always be cultivated.⁵⁷ As a sign of the superb joy of living it cannot be excessive; for it expresses the Self in its unmixed properties; and if the emotion were to transgress its own bounds it would at the same time exact more from the self than Nature had made possible.⁵⁸ Hence, emotion when pure is steady, but emotion when linked with baser passion, like hate, tends to engage the mind's attention to the retirement of all nobler thoughts.⁵⁹ Certain definite results, such as spiritual inertia and sinister suspicion, can be traced directly to emotional excess; and their very diversity, malignity and widespread contagion prove how little they are under our command.⁶⁰ It is the business of the developing self, then, to cleanse its emotions of extraneous elements and to guard most vigilantly against the reappearance of every excluded habit. In this sphere it is only too true that vigilance is the price of liberty.⁶¹ Our success as responsible sentinels will be attested by a change both in the outward effects of our action, and in the inward peace. Hatred with its attendant discords must inevitably give place to a genuine sympathy for our kind, which in a man's private psychology will serve to redress the balance of thought and enlarge the power of choice.

II

The second aspect of self-conscious development is ethical. It considers man as fitted into the framework of society. It affirms that the gregarious instinct, so pronounced in the construction of character, has its roots deep in the unique purpose of the race. It takes man out of the exclusion of self and plants his life in the soil of humanity. We have hitherto conceived him as possessing gifts, properties, powers; now we must describe him as the depositary of obligations. Heretofore, a multitude of impressions have thronged through his senses, tending to confirm his judgment of separateness; now from his garnished mind pours out a stream of desires whose destination is the heart

⁵⁷ IV, 42, 45, Sch.

⁵⁸ IV, 6.

⁶¹ IV, App. xxx.

⁵⁹ IV, 61.

⁶⁰ V, 20, Sch.

of another moral being. The horizon of self is indefinitely expanded. A social consciousness emerges. We are citizens of the world. The bodies and minds of individual men have coalesced into a "single body and a single mind, and all men with one consent seek what is serviceable to all."⁶² Thus the mind of humanity is not a complex of a million separate minds, but a definite consciousness, growing ever more clear with the progress of reflective civilization. Such is the hope which sweeps the fancy of our philosopher. We proceed to examine the several points that bring it within the range of credibility.

The ethical relation is primarily grounded in the nature of man. It is not forced upon him by mysterious chance nor mediated by overwhelming Fate. In the first place the mental equipment of men is the same. They respond to the same exciting causes, and can be affected favorably only by those objects which have properties in common with them.⁶³ They will be most favorably affected by individuals whose sum of qualities is the same as their own. The only stimulus of which this is true is another man. Inferior species have similar organic functions, but they lack the impulse of reflection, man's distinguishing endowment, and as truly a law of his nature as any instinct held in common with them.⁶⁴ The rational impulse therefore cannot be satisfied by commerce with animals. Towards them we exercise the same rights that they by virtue of their equipment have in us, *viz.*, the power of physical control. But since everyone's rights are defined by the intrinsic laws of his being, man will assume much more sweeping rights over his subordinates. He will use them as befits his needs, and neither religious scruple nor mawkish sentiment can dispute his mode of treatment.⁶⁵ To satisfy the reflective impulse, however, Nature has provided a multitude of kindred minds and ordained that only by the union of sexes, both endowed with the principle of intelligence, could the perpetuity of the race be won.⁶⁶ Such minds are capable of instituting fellowship quite out of keeping with the

⁶² IV, 18, Sch.

⁶³ IV, 29.

⁶⁴ IV, 35, Cor. i: *cf.* III, 49, Sch.

⁶⁵ IV, 37, Sch. i.

⁶⁶ IV, 68, Sch.; App. 20.

impact of simpler organic tendencies. They can organize an exchange of ideas through articulate symbols, an indisputable evidence of reflection, and thereby understand one another's needs and together develop their distinctive purpose.⁶⁷

To the parity of nature we must next add the community of end; their destiny is the same. We have defined the goal of the self's private endeavor and discovered that it is implicated in the nature of mind. But one self is typical of every other. What belongs to the first must find its secure place in the second, the third, and each succeeding self to the end of time. To rob one man of the end ascribed to another would be equivalent to denying him the right of selfhood.⁶⁸ The thesis is thus supported by a *reductio ad impossibile*, valid indeed as an argument but not practically persuasive. We turn to a more homely, albeit effective defense, as suggested by the universalistic aspects of hedonism. For every agent by nature seeks his own highest good and with every successful attempt advances by a fixed degree the command over his own resources. Now if all men be involved in the same moral struggle, the interests of each individual agent will be proportionately improved. Hence, no man can better serve his own ends than by aiding his neighbor in a consistent quest for rectitude of life.⁶⁹ That nature has fashioned minds with genius to fit them for entering such a mutually favorable competition, is a plain contradiction of a popular, though perverted theory, which holds that to pursue one's personal advantage is the "foundation of impiety."⁷⁰ Therefore, every man as responsible agent must lend his "skill and temperament" to the training of his fellows, with a view to organizing for them the same scheme of conduct that he has consciously conceived for himself.⁷¹ In this way man's private desires become synonymous with the wider issues of the race; and since private desires born of deep contemplation of the self's true nature are always good, it follows that our public virtues will exhibit the same standard of excellence; in other

⁶⁷ IV, App. 26.

⁶⁸ IV, 36, Sch.

⁶⁹ IV, 35, Cor. ii; 37, second Dem.

⁷⁰ IV, 18, Sch.

⁷¹ IV, App. ix.

words, that justice, fidelity and benevolence will surely prevail.⁷²

Given these two facts organic to the life of man, what has been their effect on the actual movements of society? The argument for social consciousness based on experience is singularly convincing. It has a double edge; it states, first, what privations men are saved from by association, and secondly, how their natural wants are satisfactorily covered.⁷³ A balance of interests proves that the advantage is distinctly on the side of social cooperation. For if every man exercised his so-called natural rights, he would indiscriminately avenge his private wrongs and expend hate and aversion upon all who in any way opposed his self-assertions. The result would be confusion, pain and death. Hence, such tendencies must somehow be curbed, and the natural rights which give warrant to them voluntarily relinquished. But the organization of the State is not after all a proscription of inherent powers; it is a definite recognition of man's most fundamental impulse, his desire for life. How can he protect life and limb, if on every hand unrestrained enemies are lusting for his blood? The principle of surrendering secondary rights in order to safeguard the primary purpose is well expressed by Spinoza in the words, "Men avoid inflicting injury through fear of receiving a greater injury themselves."⁷⁴ To save men from the dominion of hate by a just regard for the interests of all is the unquestioned boon which coalescence in an organized society prescribes. It cannot fail to increase the earning power of each new moral endeavor.⁷⁵

But important as this phase of the argument is, it must not be left to stand alone. In fact, by itself it would be discredited by events. For harmony in the social mind, if grounded solely in fear, is tenuous and fleeting. Fear, as we have intimated, springs always from weakness of spirit. When weakness of a specific sort is multiplied in a congeries of minds, the result can be nothing but weakness. If men entertain a truce solely because of their wavering temper, the steadfastness of the convention is

⁷² IV, 18, Sch.

⁷³ IV, 35, Sch.

⁷⁴ IV, 37, Sch. ii.

⁷⁵ Cf. IV, 46, Sch.

precarious to the last degree.⁷⁶ To found a state for the development of social life, to establish an arena for the battle of ethical principles, the argument must guarantee certain positive details. For example, it must insure the cultivation of arts and crafts as the legitimate output of the inventive mind of man. In all the history of the human race an accepted medium of exchange has been the sheet-anchor of social stability. Anthropology in its recent inquiries has amply demonstrated what Spinoza implied and all economists have dwelt on, *viz.*, that the test of organization, the evidence of a common consciousness, is revealed with great clearness in the tribe's attitude to barter and trade. Just as in untutored society a piece of metal or its equivalent evinces one man's readiness to trust his neighbor, so in the highly complex system of modern credit the same trait appears on a grandiose scale.⁷⁷ Again, common consciousness feels the inevitable discrepancy between individuals units in place, opportunity and equipment. There are numbers of men naturally disqualified for service. Individual munificence, however great, can not provide for the needs of poverty, distress and delinquency. The organized state must do so. It is the trustee of the common good, and to its offices all disabled citizens are justified in appealing. The governing motive should never be that of lordly generosity. Charity is not an emotional sentiment; it is good economic policy. It has "regard for the general advantage." By helping one, the state helps all.⁷⁸ Such is the breadth of view to which the social consciousness calls us. He who enters intelligently into the spirit of mutualism finds himself carried along the course of personal development at an amazing speed. Truly the end of all is each man's projected goal.

The term of the ethical dialectic is now in sight, a civil manhood, so to say, embodying the universalized virtues of the single self. By the very nature of the case it can never be fully reached; but its several stages will be realized *pari passu* with the realization of the individual series. The process, however, is more involved, inasmuch as a multitude of minds meet and struggle in the same arena. The persistent interaction of self-

⁷⁶ IV, App. 16.

⁷⁷ Cf. IV, App. 28.

⁷⁸ IV, App. 17.

empowered agents gives edge and value to the ethical life. Just what that interaction is, just how the contest may be successfully maintained, is the next point to be determined.

Moral energies do not spring from the play of unharnessed impulses. These by themselves evince no tendency to bind men together. The only kind of union implied is that which subjects the weaker to the forcible dominion of the stronger. Thus, if we study to make other men live according to rules devised by ourselves, we are purposely using them for the promotion of our own interest. For if they by any hap dispossess us of our coveted goods, instantly hate and threats of vengeance ensue.⁷⁹ Plainly, then, at root men cannot be in harmony and still pursue the same material end, since one of them must at length lay engaging hands upon it and wrest it from the other's control. Discomfiture and chagrin are the penalties. Not good as the particular object of desire, but good as realized by one, and denied to the other, is the true index of this state of feeling.⁸⁰ On so divisive a basis a program looking to the formation of common obligations cannot be effected. It is this very situation which Spinoza conceives as existing in prehistoric times. The "state of nature" was a state of discord and despair. Men, being a prey to unharnessed appetites, acted always in defiance of their neighbor's interests. Hence, no standards of good and evil could be framed, since each agent was a law to himself, and standards even if set up would be at once in conflict and could only be confirmed by force. Moreover, in a state of nature the idea of private property is quite unknown. Land and tools are held in common, used as each one pleases, and then abandoned. It is impossible for a man to perform the most rudimentary duty, *viz.*, rendering to another man what rightfully belongs to him. In other words, the conceits of Ethics are as yet unframed.

Ethical interaction cannot depend primarily upon reaction to common needs. From what then does it derive its impetus? Plainly from the same reflective impulse which points the way to the evolution of the social consciousness. We must not suppose however that the organic appetites of body are extinguished

⁷⁹ IV, 37, Sch. i.

⁸⁰ IV, 34, Sch.

by the magic of a word. On the contrary familiar emotions once directed to instinctive ends will be illuminated with new beauty when wrought upon by a truly moral purpose. Thus ambition, which seeks a man's private aggrandisement by absorbing other interests into his own, is transmuted into an instrument of reflection, collating the common habits, rights, duties and destinies of mankind into a superior virtue, and clothing it with the honored name of Piety.⁸¹ A broader appraisal of Self is made in view of its new relations to other selves. The exertion of power formerly confined to its effect upon our own life is now judged in a twofold way. No longer alone and irresponsible in a stimulating environment, no longer at liberty to make an unmingled sense-impact on our fellow, as the lower organism does, we are constrained to study his activity in the same manner in which we studied our own. Perceiving that all mutual interests are inextricably mingled, we are bound to treat his needs with courteous consideration. If the reflective mind is the only power capable of forming friendship, it is the manifest duty of him who possesses it to guide his behavior by the rules of friendly intercourse. For how, if he does not follow the clear tendency of his kind, can he possibly rise to a level of moral obligation, where he acts out of due respect to his neighbor's interests?⁸²

The trial of strength often comes suddenly, but when it comes it reveals the stage of development with unfailing exactness. A wrong done, perhaps amid aggravated circumstances, the deep hurt to our sensibilities, the festering sore, the smoldering resentment, the bursting of bonds in flaming anger,—who has not passed through spiritual anguish, in which emotions like these have crowded thick upon him? Impulse, the handmaid of Hate, reigns supreme, and with queenly fury terrorizes the hopes of friendship into silence. If ever the “state of nature” has been conquered, it returns again with pristine vigor, and woe to the mind that dares to challenge the intruder's entry! But the self which has already tasted the joys of freedom knows how galling the old servitude would be, if revived. Its business therefore is

⁸¹ V, 4, Sch.

⁸² IV, 37, Sch. i.

to organize a code of defense. It will affirm the value of moral relations, possible only on the footing of friendship. It will point again to the fact that coalescence, social harmony, is the birthright of the mind, and that our real good as reflective beings can spring alone from the mutual discharge of duty. It will analyze to the minutest point the causes leading to the infliction of wrong, and devise methods by which they can be either averted or mitigated in effect. When these things are done the heat of anger shall have been quenched, at least in part, and the moral equilibrium in part restored, and we shall have been taught the office of patience as a sufficient answer to the defiance and disesteem of the world.⁸³

So much for the triumph of reason among neighbors. No less impressive is its triumph in the sphere of citizenship. When men yielded to the State their right to redress private injuries, they gave up also by implication a right to pass judgment on another's conduct.⁸⁴ Judgment can be adequately framed when the interests of all are taken into account, that is to say, when the peace of the body politic is safeguarded. The intent of requital for wrong is not recrimination, and should not be attended by a feeling of indignation. Right and wrong, justice and injustice do not exist as guiding concepts in a state of nature; for, as we have seen, relationships such as owner and goods are entirely foreign to its experience. They enter when by common consent rights and privileges are delegated to particular persons. It would be meaningless to punish an organic being as a responsible agent before the basis of his responsibility has been laid. That would be an attempt to ruin him simply out of instinctive opposition, without vindicating in the least the new principle of organization which the impulse of reflection has set in motion. Penal action is not retributive but curative. It aims to preserve the harmony of the social units and to provide a field for the proper working out of ethical problems. It argues that when men enter a moral society they receive a guarantee of safe conduct so long as they comply with the terms of the compact, and that when they have violated its

⁸³ V, 10, Sch.; IV, App. 14.

⁸⁴ IV, App. 24.

terms they have by that act made it more difficult for other citizens to fulfil their part of the agreement. Hence, the public welfare compels the state to exact reprisal by distraint or physical disability. If law and its sanctions be not administered, social coalescence fails and the foundations of the State crumble away.⁸⁵

The general rule just enunciated is illustrated in the attitude of the moral agent towards the matter of honesty. Is not a man justified in resorting to deceit for the sake of defending himself against injury? Does not the most elementary conation demand that by hook or crook the menacing enemy should be circumvented? The answer must be found in the distinctive purpose governing the development of the race. What reflection prescribes for one unit it prescribes for all. If deception be a perfectly moral implement in an individual case, it must by virtue of mental consanguinity be fitted to the conduct of mankind in general. But in that event no one would feel himself under obligation to this or any other law, and the whole system of carefully developed jurisprudence would be null and void. Just as soon as we understand that such an issue contradicts both the meaning of the reflective impulse and the actual practice of history the absurdity of deceit as an instrument of self-defense is convincingly apparent.⁸⁶ We are forced to be honest in order to preserve the equilibrium of society and secure our own welfare,—so fully do the moral canons which have guided the upward trend of civilization take their color from the relation of private interests to the common good.

The destiny of man being social in its values, his freedom can be attained only under the spell of ethical interaction. If commerce with irrational creatures fails to call out the deeper motives of the self, equally unavailing is a man's communion with himself. For complete freedom of thought cannot be realized so long as he declines to throw into the scale every penny-weight of power which his unique purpose affords him. To dwell in solitude away from the haunts of men, so far from enlarging his independence, in reality shuts him off from the

⁸⁵ IV, 37, Sch. ii; 51.

⁸⁶ IV, 72.

very forces which can satisfy the needs of his nature.⁸⁷ In the last analysis, then, to live untrammelled by the restraints of traditionary law is not an evidence of freedom. The average citizen is right in dealing harshly with one who slights or scornfully rejects the received customs of society. These have been created by the determined push of the reflective instinct, questing after an ever freer atmosphere for its inspirations.⁸⁸ Selfhood comes to its surest privilege under the favoring stimulus of social organization. It must be burdened with duties in order to broaden its scope of activity. The more serious responsibilities it assumes, the greater is its degree of freedom. Therefore to possess the "general rights of citizenship" is the ambition of the freedom-seeking soul.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, in responding to social stimulus one may be as discriminating as in his organic reactions,—even more so. Freedom does not demand universal assumption of ethical relations. Indeed, the choice we make of personal obligation will frequently denote the type of freedom reached. Thus, the wise man may decline to accept favors from one ruled by appetite, on the ground that the standard of judgment is different. Reason does not reckon human intercourse as a field for barter and exchange. We do not bestow a benefit for the sake of receiving an exact recompense in kind. Impulse on the other hand regards it as a hardship when its advances are otherwise estimated than in its two terms. The result is disappointment and revenge. To avoid such a *contretemps* reflection bids us use our freedom in choosing whom we shall meet in intimate moral relations, with the reservation that when associated with those whose nature is averse from our own, and forced to accept a favor, we should match their offers with equal service, never giving them a chance to dispute our motive or suspect a note of contentment in our behavior.⁹⁰

The freedom caught in such ethical snatches finds its fulfillment in the social harmony, where men live in exclusive obedience to the laws of reason and each man is in fact his brother's keeper.⁹¹

⁸⁷ IV, 35, Sch.

⁸⁸ IV, 73.

⁹¹ IV, 35, Cor. i; 46, Sch.

⁸⁸ Cf. IV, App. 14.

⁹⁰ IV, 70, 71.

III

The dialectic of self-realization is not satisfied by man's reflective interpretation of private reaction or his absorption in the common consciousness of his kind. These two experiences, varied and engrossing as they are, yet in each analysis deal with particular objects, whose relations to him are always determined by the categories of logical thought. We catch the idea of self-hood through the unceasing correlating movements of the mind. This percept, that percept, this feeling, that feeling,—units of consciousness,—follow one another so closely, and are by instinct so concisely compared, that without initiation on the part of the thinker the picture of a self emerges. Then, brought in contact with similar minds, a new type of image is generated, new trains of thought are started. Springs of action heretofore untapped send forth their gleaming emotions. Man was not made to dwell alone. He must speak with a fellowman and through the avenues of friendship construct the laws of ethical restraint, which in the end shall refine his character and incite him to noble deeds. The reflective impulse as we have thus far studied it guarantees all this to its holders. But it guarantees more, much more; it opens a new continent of observation. Reflection, we said, operates first in the field of psychology, secondly in the field of ethics. Now we advance one step further and describe the *ultima thule* of human endeavor. The impulse becomes religious, and when it has been duly developed the dialectic of self is satisfied.

We should note at the outset that religion in Spinoza's opinion is not an interloper, masquerading under the guise of human desire. To construe its terms, as many have done, as childish reactions to nature's portents, as elaborate figments of poetic fancy, as political machinery for the suppression of popular revolt, or in the latest form as the product of age-long development in certain nerve-tracts of the brain, would be from his point of view merely clever examples of *petitio principii*. Religion stands on the same platform as moral obligation. If men by virtue of their unique purpose are constrained to associate

themselves in the interchange of thought, just as truly are they bound to entertain the idea of wider relations, such as the term Religion connotes.⁹² To follow a religious mode of life one does not need to wait upon the high moments of inspiration, when he fully understands the values of the world-consciousness. Religious feeling of a rudimentary sort, yet a true child of natural impulse, controls even the lowest rounds of racial behavior. Even when civilization has enlightened the horizon of scientific inquiry, but kept theological dogma crude and mercenary, this offshoot of reflection remains vigorous and compelling. The explanation is not far to seek. Since private interest is and must be the "first foundation of virtue and the rule of right living," anything that conduces to that end cannot be left on one side. Plainly among the most constructive qualities of the human mind none is more insistent in its claim to primacy than broadmindedness.⁹³ The nearer evidences of so high a trait are found in the strictly empirical phenomena of sobriety and presence of mind in the face of danger.⁹⁴ But there are finer examples of it, not to be reckoned in terms of physical reaction. They may be paralleled by the edicts of civil manhood, which bid us bear with equanimity the social wrongs we cannot cure. If we, like other individuals, are imbedded in the solid fabric of nature and cannot act without her call, shall we mope and moan amid circumstances that the momentary complex of ideas proclaims as contrary to our best interests? Shall we not rather as reflective beings, understanding the irreversible necessity of every event, accept our lot without complaint and steel the mind to persist in such acquiescence?⁹⁵ To this frame of thought the Stoics approached, and certainly we cannot refrain from regarding their conduct as guided by the religious instincts of the race.⁹⁶ The conclusion is again pressed home that man can "neither be nor be conceived" without the faculty of entering into an appreciation of the highest good.⁹⁷ Religious aspirations are common to all men.

⁹² IV, 37, Sch. i.

⁹³ Animositatis. V, 41 and Sch.

⁹⁴ III, 59, Sch.

⁹⁵ IV, App. 32.

⁹⁶ Cf. V, Pref.

⁹⁷ IV, 36, Sch.

Still another fact confronts the careful student. If religion and the ethical sense issue from the same impulse, there must be some intimate interaction between them. They cannot be sequestered in wholly unrelated compartments of thought. They belong to an organic Self whose every expression embodies the feeling of the entire system.⁹⁸ It is an axiom of the history of religious creeds that each new faith is still-born except as it has the capacity of projecting its tenets into the common life of the people. The milieu of religion is not individual conviction but the social exchange. It follows that the religious impulse, being supreme in the counsels of selfhood, cannot fail to exert a commanding influence over moral conduct. Private interests, we found, were practically subserved by seeking for others the same good which we crave for ourselves. Interpret private interests in the light of a religious ideal, and we expand indefinitely their values. But while we increase the compass of our own good, we cannot exclude our neighbor from sharing in the same advance. In order therefore to realize the newly conceived individual good we must put forth larger exertion for the benefit of the social whole. Each step in the understanding of the religious ideal makes a man more acutely sensitive to his ethical obligation.⁹⁹ How shall we frame a more authentic test of the purity of religious progress than by examining the state of morals in any community where the ideal has been intelligently adopted? For example, every act that carries in its train the elements of pain, is contrary to justice as organized in civil law, and to the higher instincts of religion.¹⁰⁰ Now if the social tendency be to recompense hate with hate, we not only prove how little we understand the nature of duty, but also how completely we have misconceived the salient facts of the universe. True virtue can only be maintained by repeating in human conduct the harmony of nature. What unreflective men have called disorder and injustice in the operation of her laws is now seen to have issued from their confused or fragmentary view of events.¹⁰¹ Nature is ruled by unbending necessity; it has no hate or revenge. If

⁹⁸ Cf. IV, 60.

⁹⁹ IV, 37, Dem.

¹⁰⁰ IV, App. 24.

¹⁰¹ IV, 73, Sch.

religion be allowed to have her way in the ethical development of the race, she will prescribe love and brotherhood and a just regard for another's rights.¹⁰² Her ministry is remarkably efficacious; for those who are the beneficiaries of love, especially of the sort prompted by religious intelligence, find a new joy in living, a new appreciation of the fibre of manhood, that sinks the impulse of resentment in the resolve to do good. It cannot be denied that the type and mode of execution of the religious ideal are authoritative gauges of the race's moral character. If religion does nothing else, it guarantees to every man freedom deliberately to cancel the common response to threat and abuse, and make return of good for evil. No greater evidence of the autonomy of self can be desired.¹⁰³

Having determined the universal validity of reflection's highest impulse, we next seek acquaintance with its terms. Towards what does this drive carry us? Reflective effort begins with the commonest data of perception, but it does not stop there. It continues its correlating office in the vicinage of contending minds; but here too its aims are not finally realized. There is a province of human experience as yet untouched, one too that lies altogether beyond the pale of animal simulation. For while the higher organism may take pleasure in the presence of its kind, may suffer from what looks like nostalgic depression when a mate is removed, may even recognize some signs of communication and fashion a code of subhuman ethics, there is not a scintilla of evidence to suggest that the dog or horse feels himself bowed in awe before the mystery of cosmic power. In this domain man dwells alone, serenely alone. He cannot share his secret intimations with the brute; he cannot at times express the strange exhilaration to his most appreciative neighbor. Religion, as no other function of the reflective impulse, proves that man's purpose is unique, and that however closely his other actions resemble the reactional processes of lower organisms, when we reach the stage of broadest sweep the conceptual powers of the human mind are no longer susceptible of imitation. For

¹⁰² IV, App. 15; V. 20.

¹⁰³ IV. 46, Sch.

it is essential to the program of religion that we enter the highest field of knowledge which we are capable of investigating.¹⁰⁴ This will not imply that we must cover every detail of scientific procedure. Only infinite intelligence could do that, and infinite intelligence is by hypothesis the limiting concept toward which the refinement of human experience tends. Religion assumes that we know that God exists, but it does not assume that we know all the modes of divine activity.¹⁰⁵

The attitude of reflection as respects the world-problem is, Spinoza argues, radically different from that of sense-perception. Let us take the first of the infinite attributes, *viz.*, Extension. How does the eye or the hand regard Matter? Not as infinite, for their sensuous reach is extremely limited; not as indivisible, for the parts fall into analyzable bits before the simplest experiment of chemistry; nor yet as permanent, for vapor may be condensed into water, and water into solid, all material elements being subject to the rules of genesis and dissolution. If this were the end of our inquiry, the place of religion would be entirely vacated. Reflection however enters, and shows that though one element may change into another there is no resultant loss; that when chemical units are compounded they invariably assume a fixed relation; and that each event in the purview of perception is tied back to another, and that to still another, until an infinite series is set in motion, passing by assumption the grasp of a single mind. Thus are we drawn away from the contemplation of the broken arcs to the apprehension of the spheric round. God, the unchangeable Substance, engages the religious impulse as its proper end-in-view.¹⁰⁶

No less emphatic is the mind's *rapprochement* towards the second of the divine attributes. Thought, or consciousness, we have already discovered, is another aspect of tangible matter.¹⁰⁷ The behavior of a biological organism is interpreted through the function which its primary or secondary impulses perform. In the case of man, when a wholly new purpose appears the office of consciousness becomes exceedingly complex, and at times

¹⁰⁴ IV, 28, Dem.

¹⁰⁵ IV, App. 4.

¹⁰⁶ I, 15, Sch.

¹⁰⁷ Sup. pg. 43.

baffles understanding. Nevertheless, we are persuaded that its business is to express the activity of the organic life by means of a self-discriminating personality. When we leave the level of "finite modes" may we carry with us the same principle of coordination? Is it true that the universe possesses a *consciousness*, which infallibly interprets the minutest facts of physics and chemistry? Spinoza argues for this position. He holds that we "must explain the order of the whole of nature or the whole chain of causes through the attribute of thought only."¹⁰⁸ God is not alone extended Substance; he is a thinking Thing.¹⁰⁹ Granting this, we are not merely permitted, we are obliged to examine the total meaning of nature. This impetus for examination stirs within us in the guise of religion. It must be strictly differentiated from the common habit of thought, that appoints for each natural event a specific end. Thus, men are constantly saying that Nature has blundered or left her work undone,—because she has not measured her act by their pre-conceived types. Her duty, they affirm, is to adapt every physical law or organic process to the good of humanity, man being her choicest product.

The mistake, which is a familiar one, lies in considering each phenomenon in its individual relations and apart from the organization of the whole. God does not act for this or that private end—he does not act for an end as such, a thing precedently conceived, but as yet unrealized. Nature exists because it exists, and acts because it acts.¹¹⁰ The doctrine of finality is without meaning here, for Nature does not admit of imperfections. Rather is she steadily and with increasing clearness revealing her glorious perfections to intelligent observers, tying both scientific laws and the single events illustrating them back to the unbending mechanism of her system.¹¹¹ Hence, the quest of the religious impulse is for a view of the world from whose contour the incidents of defect are being progressively eliminated. That the quest should not be vain may be gathered from the fundamental nature of man. For his mind can have a pre-

¹⁰⁸ II, 7, Sch.

¹⁰⁹ II, 1.

¹¹⁰ I, II.

¹¹¹ Cf. II, 5.

cise knowledge of reality,—its own actions, its body, the environing objects, all part and parcel of the divine Substance.¹¹² If we accepted as guides only ideas that could be verified by facts, we should soon exclude pain as a human experience, and understanding perfectly the ways of Nature move with unintercepted freedom amid the varied combinations of her forces.¹¹³ Indeed, if the reflective powers had been fully developed at the start, we should have had no knowledge of good and evil, but a continuous *rapproch* with the necessary order of the world. The career of humanity, however, proves that its potential capacity has never been completely unfolded except in the limiting concept. There have been temporary snatches of lucid thought, as in the faith of the Patriarchs and in the spirit of Christ, but the great majority of mankind have sold their religious birthright for the grossest gratifications of sense.¹¹⁴ They have trodden the sodden path of the beast, when they might have contributed to the framing of an ethical standard whose terms would have spelt social happiness. In short, instead of emphasizing the eternal "something" which makes man divine, they have been content to esteem the fragmentary sketches of nature as of primary value and let the vast program of causality pass by unnoticed.¹¹⁵ Only when it is too late do narrow minds realize how futile it is for a man to put himself in a mood indifferent or antagonistic to natural force. We conquer solely by compliance.¹¹⁶

The goal of the religious impulse being definitely sighted, how, it is asked, shall we organize it into the practical experience of the Self? It cannot be done by forming a general notion, in the same way that we frame the ideas of humanity, justice, necessity, etc. For though such notions are fixed in the mind as objective facts, they are in common usage inevitably cast in the mold of a sensuous image. Nor can transcendental ideas like Being, Thing, etc., escape the same alignment. Thus, the highest concept of the mind, viz., God, has its empirical associations in some natural object or artificial device from which we

¹¹² II, 47, Dem.¹¹⁴ IV, 68 and Sch.¹¹⁶ V, 18.¹¹³ IV, 64.¹¹⁵ V, 23.

have drawn or into which we have injected certain controlling properties. Such a method is a prolific source of error; for there is an unbridged chasm between the idea at the base of the religious impulse and the myriad-faced forms by which men try to express it. There is no greater correspondence between them than between the true computation of figures in the subliminal consciousness and the mistaken results as worked out on paper.¹¹⁷ The application of the logical categories helps enormously to dissipate the crude and inept conceptions of divine nature, especially by holding before the mind the principle of causality.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the correct habits of religion can only be formed by training the mind to observe the universal relations of every experience. Just as true science can not be built upon scattered observations, with no common connecting thread of law, so true religion is not satisfied unless impressions of divine exertion can be submitted to a proper and adequate test. Science is the vestibule to spiritual faith.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, science is not religion and must not be substituted for it. By virtue of its place in the organization of the self the religious impulse demands a mode of functioning different from the earlier phases of reflection.¹²⁰ Religion is distinctly an immediate experience. It excludes the scientific formulas that embrace all things under general principles. It isolates a particular object and considers it as free, that is, as existing by the necessity of its own nature and as determining its own action.¹²¹ Nor is such an attitude without good support. For reality is embodied in every reaction, and reality is but another name for God. Hence religion does not ask, as science does, for an elaborate array of empirical data upon the basis of which an adequate conclusion can be made. Religion takes an individual fact, and by understanding it understands universal Nature.¹²² Let us study the meaning of a familiar instinct, *e.g.*, the sex impulse. Viewed simply as a function of body it responds to its proper stimulus in the same fashion as any other

¹¹⁷ II, Sch. i: 47, Sch.

¹¹⁸ II, 42, Cor. ii.

¹¹⁹ V, 28.

¹²⁰ V, 36, Sch.

¹²¹ V, 5; I, Def. vii.

¹²² V, 24.

typical impulse.¹²³ When it becomes the subject of rational discipline the end-in-view is proportionately broadened. The interests of society at large are now consulted. Instead of being an instrument for personal gratification the sex impulse turns its attention to the generation of healthy offspring, and the training of childhood in the art of living.¹²⁴ The good which a man covets for himself, *viz.*, Life, he also covets for others, and he will endeavor not only to discharge his own duty in an honorable way but also to influence other men to the same sort of action.¹²⁵

Furthermore, the implications of sex are not exhausted when we have fulfilled its natural offices. They are wider in scope; they possess profoundly spiritual values. The fact is unequivocally affirmed that every reaction, no matter how obscure, carries with it a complete *Weltanschauung*. It requires only the due exercise of reflective thought in order to disclose the cosmic elements in the simplest facts of experience.¹²⁶ Thus, in the appetite under consideration the specific organs involved become the symbols of universal fertility. Ethnic religions have seized upon their functions as evidence of the presence of superhuman power in the world. Hence, mythologic allegories like that of Leda and the swan, phallic rites, official prostitution attest the crude but natural quest for life. In the higher faiths the same symbols are employed, divested of course of their physical appurtenances and guaranteeing to their votaries unqualified "freedom of soul."¹²⁷ By a process of metaphoric change generation is superseded by re-generation, the female principle becomes the medium for the introduction of mystic vitality, while the parental instinct is lost in the gracious splendor of a divine Fatherhood.

The principle of organicity which we have just illustrated first comes to view in the action of a living body. There we are not at liberty to assume a local function of worth to itself alone. The organism is thoroughly articulated. Its appetites conform to the good of the whole and can be understood solely through its terms.¹²⁸ Every organ may be appraised as the body *in parvo*.

¹²³ III, 57, Sch.

¹²⁴ IV, App. 20.

¹²⁵ III, 6; IV, 35, Cor. i; 37.

¹²⁶ V, 14; *cf.* Intel. Emend. pg. 6.

¹²⁷ *Cf.* IV, App. 20.

¹²⁸ IV, 60.

That is to say, the body's general purpose is crystallized in the duty of a particular impulse,—a *Konzentrierung*, as Fichte would say.¹²⁹ More impressive still is the organical character of the self. It is an axiom of life that no man can preserve his corporate integrity for the sake of another object.¹³⁰ In the reflective valuation of experience no higher action can claim acceptance, for the reason that if another purpose alien to the subject's welfare should be introduced it would disturb the course of his development, and we should be unable to interpret the act by the conscious purpose of the whole. Whatever events in any life appear to be contrary to the general trend assume that aspect, in all probability, because we are not in position to detect or properly assess the value of every element entering into the system of the particular Self. Analyzed to its core, the most insignificant gesture of body will eventually reveal the stamp of personal character, the degree of self-unfolding, which the agent has attained. The mind is the formal cause of all reactions, and hence mirrors itself in the common facts of life.¹³¹

Still a third phase of teleological concentration on a broader plane is the constitution of human society. Here the particular self is reflected in the collective movements of mankind. Here a man may project himself fully upon the minds of his fellows without fearing to encounter a single trait of character that he himself cannot in some measure duplicate. If the structure of social life were not organic the principles of jurisprudence would be entirely without effect; for example, the punishment of an offender derives its force from the fact that the united will of society expresses itself concretely against any infraction of its rules. By reason of this give-and-take relation,—the individual to the State and the State to its obscurest citizen,—it is possible to make an example of some notorious misdemeanant, the majesty of common law finding its vindication in his person.¹³² It is competent, therefore, without weaving the web of legal analytics, to advance at a leap from the validity of retributive justice in one instance to its validity in the whole scheme of

¹²⁹ Cf. *Wissenschaftslehre*, 1801, Sec. 37.

¹³⁰ IV, 25.

¹³¹ V, 31.

¹³² IV, 37, Sch. ii.

juridical administration. The principle of organicity is abundantly verified in the transactions of social life.

But when we reach the supreme level of human intelligence, where the religious impulse makes itself felt, does the same principle hold good? Does the illustration already adduced rest upon a secure foundation? Is it a fact that by a process called Intuition the mind can pass *auf ainem Blicke* from the recognition of reality in a given object to the complete understanding of what it means to the whole world of reality?¹³³ The thing we are most deeply interested in is the Self, whose career we are building. The self as body is embedded in the order of Nature and of necessity obeys her will implicitly. The Self as conscious mind is not dependent on place or time. Hence, scientific inquiry has not been forced to wait for an empirical touch with all the myriad courses of the stellar world, ere its eternal secrets were divulged; such a monumental deduction as the principle of gravitation sprang from the study of inconsiderable data. Still, even here certain categories of logic, such as uniformity, were applied, in order to reach the end. In intuitive knowledge, on the other hand, the self goes directly beyond experience, and opens converse, so to say, with the universe as a whole. It begins to see that its mode of action is emblematic of the movements of nature. For as selfhood in man is the teleological equivalent of the marvellously varied and intricate reactions of body, so the divine Self—"God's power of thinking"—proves to be the teleological aspect of "his realized power of acting."¹³⁴ And as man's body follows inevitably the path prescribed by natural law, so man's mind, his personal Self, being organically associated with the world of consciousness,¹³⁵ must register the universal meaning of the mechanical order.¹³⁶

How far religious insight carries the mind beyond the pale of conceptual thinking may be judged by its attitude towards the idea of death. What is death? Death, says reflection, is the

¹³³ V, 25.

¹³⁴ II, 7, Cor.

¹³⁵ II, 13, 'Sch.; V, 30, 36.

¹³⁶ Cf. Joachim's view of teleology in Spinoza's philosophy, "A Study of Spinoza's Ethics," p. 232.

result of the joint action of certain chemico-physical forces, conspiring within the confines of a given organism. Death comes to all—none may escape. It is a standing proof of the inexorable execution of the canon of causality. The duty of the reflective observer is to absorb whatever pain emerges,—sorrow, fear, decline of personal initiative,—in a serene contemplation of the infallibility of natural law. But the “hurt of death” is not abolished by a skilful use of logic. It is deeper than argument; it is seated in the heart of human hope. We may mitigate its terrors by tracing its causes, but we cannot remove its sting. A higher office than rational persuasion is needed here. Spinoza finds its terms in the intuitions of religion. Death is not death, as we commonly esteem it. Death is the gateway to life. The plant droops, dies, and is disorganized; but its parts, scattered to the winds, become the fructifying forces in higher grades of life. The animal perishes at the stroke of man’s blade; but its flesh once digested furnishes bone and sinew, strength of arm and vigor of brain. The man dies, his body separates into its elemental units; his mind redolent of piquant thoughts is silent, unheard. Is that all? Have his mighty loves, his superb ideals, his compelling purposes vanished? For this world, as an entity he is dead, but as a spiritual power in contemporary affairs or among generations unborn no death of body can abrogate his right to live. Death viewed from its teleological implications is not itself an end, it is the means for attaining the ultimate end of all things, that is, Life.¹³⁷

The precepts of religion so cogent in this familiar connection may be worked out in respect to every reaction which leaves upon us the impression of pain.¹³⁸ They prove themselves to be more powerful than the abstract terms of reason, because we are conscious, as already pointed out, of a perfect correspondence between our possible selves and the universal self.¹³⁹ They prepare us, as logical categories cannot, for an approximation to the personal freedom, where sense and the recollection of sensory images shall count as little as possible in the forming

¹³⁷ Cf. V, 31, Sch., 42. Sch.

¹³⁹ V, 36, Sch.

¹³⁸ V, 38.

of judgment. Hence, every time we have accepted one of religion's counsels we have come that much nearer to the true self which we are striving to evolve,—“the chief part of the mind, which is eternal.”¹⁴⁰ If man could reach the terminus of the infinitely repeated dialectic, he would cease to be man, he would become God.¹⁴¹ But since that is only an intellectual concept, his business plainly is to fit every private reaction into the organic scheme of the world, learning especially that events fraught, in his view, with evil consequences, are at root symbolic of some universal principle, the understanding of which will perceptibly lighten his way.

It will be noticed that in discussing the religious impulse we have been able to distinguish the very elements which are integral to the meaning of a common reaction. Thus, we have first sought the end or purpose of the instinct, next the means of stimulating causes by which it functions, and finally the certain satisfactions issuing from every discharge of natural power. The parallel is not accidental; it is involved in the structure of the mind. That a feeling of pleasure sweeps over the body when hunger is appeased, or a beautiful object greets the eye, or very emphatically when a long-coveted treasure is secured, the most rudimentary experience can testify. Pleasure is a moment in psychic action, quite different from the original impulse or the physiological changes due to contact with environment. It calculates the successive values of consciousness, how we felt before and after the reaction took place. It cannot therefore be an enduring fact in the emotional life, except insofar as we may desire to keep a strict account of functional discharges for purposes of critical study. For directly it has affirmed the operation of one impulse, another begins to function, and its corresponding gratifications demand the same attention from the mind.¹⁴² The evanescent character of physical pleasure will appear if we compare the first glow of appreciation consequent upon—let us say—the astronomer's discovery of a new planet, with the gradually receding warmth in each recollection

¹⁴⁰ V, 39.

¹⁴¹ V, 40, Sch.

¹⁴² III, Def. Emot. iii, Explic.

thereof. Organic chemistry has no instruments for measuring the change in cellular tissue or the rapid acceleration in the blood circulation under the primary strain. It will be still more helpless when the steady abatement of feeling is contrasted with the satisfactions of mind, which grow stronger with every contemplation of the facts.

There will thus be foreshadowed a state of mind where bodily behavior is reduced to its minimum values, a state manifestly approached when the mind reacts not to particular objects, but to the totality of possible objects conceived as simultaneous stimuli, that is, to the idea of the world itself.¹⁴³ Here the pleasure-giving response attends the comprehension of a principle starting with a single event in the career, but leading out thence into the meaning of universal existence. The act is an act of reflection, and its effect upon the agent must be distinctly in the sphere of intellect, not of sense.¹⁴⁴ If now we steadily reduce the play of emotion, we shall at length reach, in concept if not in reality, the form of a Being stripped of passion, without pleasure, without pain, unable to pass from one perfection to another, knowing neither love nor hate as we know them, the apotheosis of reflection, pure intellect.¹⁴⁵ But in the mean time, —and this is the serious matter for us humans,—we may determine to a nicety how far we have advanced in the development of selfhood by the amount of satisfaction derived from religious thought, as compared with our interest in purely sensory experience.¹⁴⁶ We shall determine, too, what types of religious practice yield the most gratifying returns, whether those which appeal to the aesthetic taste, or those which go down into the philosophy of the world-scheme. The latter cannot fail to impress the mind as the superlative tests of religion. Be their appreciation by us great or small, the fact that we have actually employed their terms proves that we have attained a degree of freedom inestimably beyond the highest responsibilities of ethical intercourse, as the divine is beyond the human.¹⁴⁷

But religion does more than refine emotional interests by

¹⁴³ V, 14.

¹⁴⁵ V, 17.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. V, 36, Sch.

¹⁴⁴ V, 32, Cor.

¹⁴⁶ V, 40, Cor.

withdrawing them from sensuous contact; it brings out more clearly the intimate qualities of each. Love cannot be restricted to the mind's reaction upon objects of sense. When so understood, love is an involuntary motion of body, interpreted by the mind as pleasure accompanied by the image of an external cause.¹⁴⁸ As an ethical emotion love obeys a similar law, though now the reason why we should join in an harmonious interchange of thought becomes evident. Men have the same nature and the same goal. Yet love to one's fellowman is rarely if ever efficacious, except it be visited upon a known individual. Society as such, the social consciousness in its uncounted units, is not the fit object of a man's affection. Moral duty is direct, not pervasive. The religious impulse, however, gives rise to a new type of love. It cannot be limited to a single experience, for as soon as the mind responds thereto, instantly a whole vista of universal implications is opened up. Love that began in common fashion is suddenly transformed into a ramifying intellectual power.¹⁴⁹ The warmth of this power oftentimes overflows into the channels of sensibility, as *e.g.*, when the face of the mystic takes on a rapt expression the moment his soul has caught sight of supernal glory. But obviously the momentary elation is something more than the coalescence of certain concurrent feelings. For while we might make a sum of all possible gratifications attending the discharge of normal impulses, we should yet need to take into account the correlating activity of mind, which has united one and all under the rubric of a self.¹⁵⁰

It is apparent, then, that religion is not a meaningful conception, save as we see in man the concrete personality, the free and energetic agent, not interested primarily in reactions as physical facts, but bent on embedding them in the structure of his unfolding personal life.¹⁵¹ Man therefore identifies himself with the natural order of the world. He lives no longer in unreasoned contact with his environment; he can no longer be content with its cursory pleasures. His loves once resting on specific forms now by reflective thought embrace the essence of the whole.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ III, Def. Emots. vi.

¹⁵⁰ V, 16.

¹⁴⁹ V, 15.

¹⁵¹ V, 27.

¹⁵² V, 32 and Cor.

If the self with its loves could be infinitely magnified, so that the images of particular objects were entirely excluded, we should reach the idea of absolute Being, whose emotion—using still the familiar term—would be of the intellect alone. It follows from this that the richer the content of religious feeling, and the more varied the interests of private and public life affected, the more will the divine elements of selfhood be brought into play. Perfect love, complete acquiescence of spirit, remains an ideal never to be actualized, a concept which we identify with the divine consciousness.¹⁵³

Two practical assurances hinge upon the idea of love instilled by religion. In the first place, our theory of divine providence will be profoundly changed. Just as long as we continue to ascribe conflicting emotions or varying moods to the heart of Nature we shall find our religious attitude full of grave difficulties. How can God, whose breath is in the nostrils of all flesh, be forced to shower his benefactions on one man to the exclusion of others? Or what bribes shall a devotee offer sufficient in worth to affect the serenity of sovereign judgment? Again, what manner of distribution of natural forces shall a man conceive to be so inimical to his private interests as to persuade him that Deity has pursued a policy of resentment against him personally? The principle of reflective love proves his strictures to be without foundation. For none of them, when properly assessed, can satisfy either the logic or aspiration of his mind. Man craves for equanimity; he seeks for the elimination of mental distress. Pessimism, whose taint is in the foregoing queries, has always issued in counsels of despair, suicide crowning the soul's defeat.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, the mind in its saner moods has sought for concepts which invest it with the atmosphere of certitude. Now since the highest concept the mind can entertain is the perfection of God,¹⁵⁵ it behooves us to reorganize our religious dogmatics by the excision of all childish and mercenary notions, substituting for them the principle of judgment which the religious impulse has taught us

¹⁵³ V, 35, 36 and Sch.

¹⁵⁴ IV, 18.

¹⁵⁵ II, 46, 47.

in common experience.¹⁵⁶ For if we permit any fancy no matter how ingenious to divert the current of religious feeling, falsehood of a most serious kind will follow in its train, error big enough to arrest the growth of character and pauperize the moral sense.¹⁵⁷

The second maxim of religion comes in sight at this point. Fervor of mind generated by contact with the world consciousness refuses to be defaced by the faults of social intercourse. One of man's besetting sins is jealousy, a strange mingling of love and hate,—first, consuming devotion to a beloved object and aversion toward our rival, then the displacement of love and the rise of scorn and condemnation. This is the bent of nature, and its inexorable reward is pain.¹⁵⁸ Can ethics by its brawnier effort crush the insidious destroyer? It has argued that retaliation is suicidal. Are not the interests of each so closely intertwined with the interests of all that if one be hurt the body politic, and not least he who gave the affront, suffers accordingly? If for no other reason than for self-preservation, the dictates of morality should be observed. But obviously in the final account the compulsion of the social ideal is extremely weak. Highly organized civilizations, faced by extraordinary situations, have torn up their sensitized moral code and cast its fragments to the winds. Logic has wrought many wonders in public life, but it has never yet polarized human impulses about the idea of what the good of the world demands. Spinoza, living amid the political embroilments of the seventeenth century, knew how desperately faint the call of justice was. Not theory alone but the issue of events turned him to a higher principle. Religion, the "knowledge of God," is the one safe anchor for the struggling fleet of human desires. The degree of a man's love for his neighbor will be determined, and determined solely, by the ripeness of his religious experience.¹⁵⁹ To statesmen, who build civic prestige upon military establishments and hold that religion should be officially appointed because liberty of thought engenders fantastic ideas, tending to weaken the spirit

¹⁵⁶ V, 18, 19.

¹⁵⁷ V, 37, Dem.

¹⁵⁸ III, 35, Sch.

¹⁵⁹ IV, 37.

of loyalty, such a consideration is unthinkable. Jealousies can be kept in leash by a single force, *viz.*, preparedness for striking back. Vagaries of each and every sort yield to one remedial charm, physical might. But the shallow pessimism of the superman argument has been exposed a hundred times. There is a religious instinct within the breast, and it links itself involuntarily with the noblest ideals of the race. Those ideals cover a type of character which all may share. The fact that it is open to all eliminates the element of competition. No man can take away his neighbor's birthright, no matter how hard he try. Such properties are unique to the Self. Then, if there be no contest, there can arise no misconceptions nor any heartburns. The jealousies which sensuous rewards always excite, because just one and no more can possess the good, are entirely absent. Instead of bitter contention a benevolent rivalry for the expansion of virtue is engaged in, while the delight in our personal achievements is perceptibly heightened by the conquests of a multitude in the same field. The superiority of the religious good over those of sense is forever established.¹⁶⁰

Let us not suppose, however, that either of these maxims of religion can be immediately and fully verified to us. The road to this summit is hard and will be discovered only with the greatest labor. It must be hard, for its frequenters are extremely few. It belongs to the reflective impulse to seek out and tread the path, be it never so persistently abandoned after each new success.¹⁶¹ It belongs too to the same impulse to award to us convincing evidence of its satisfactory pursuit. What the form of that evidence is we have already described. It is manifest that even on this most exalted level of human experience the principle of compensation is not forgotten. If organic appetites yield definite pleasure, which in turn drives us by the appeal of the imagination to their repeated discharge, so religion instills within us a feeling of satisfaction,—joy that we have entered into the secrets of nature, the glow of surprise that we are really bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. The difference between sensuous pleasure and religious joy lies in

¹⁶⁰ V, 20.¹⁶¹ V, 42.

their duration. The one is ephemeral; it may be repeated indefinitely, but at length its edge will wear off with the decay of bodily powers. The joy of divine communion is permanent. There is nothing in the realm of sense that can throw it into collapse. Organic instincts may lose their value because the organs compounding them are destroyed. This applies to every material element and is covered by the law of mechanism: "There is no individual thing, than which there is not another more powerful and effective."¹⁶² But the joy of the spirit is not defined by the coordinates of time and place. It inhabits the home of the Self, and the conjunction of physical events cannot disturb its freedom.¹⁶³ If it depended for its vigor on an immediate reaction to environment, it could not survive the first passing flush. Its virtue is not empirical. Rather it is the fruit of a different type of mental action, that which deals with universal and eternal principles. The feeling attending such thought cannot be evanescent; it must be perpetual.¹⁶⁴

If, then, a man has won the first elementary article of religious faith, he should hold to it as a priceless treasure; it will never deteriorate in value nor alter in form. "Love towards God cannot be turned into hate."¹⁶⁵ This is his sure return for giving the religious impulse room to function,—a beatitude of mind, a serenity of soul,—not the captious reward for triumph over sense, but the conscious condition of his triumph. In short, religion does not offer itself to the race as the end of an ethical struggle; it affirms that it alone is the instrument by the use of which moral obligations are essentially fulfilled and the terms of selfhood adequately met.¹⁶⁶ Because it crystallizes the universal meaning of human life, it assures to its subjects an increasing degree of freedom through a wise and affectionate compliance with its terms. If the religious attitude be seriously espoused, the last fetters of sense begin to loosen, the suffocating pangs of repression yield to a larger hope. Man awakes not to a dramatic disenthralment mediated by stranger hands, but to the throb of his sovereign self-consciousness. He bears the future in his own breast. His purpose has made him free.

¹⁶² IV, Axiom.¹⁶⁴ V, 33.¹⁶⁶ V, 42.¹⁶³ V, 37.¹⁶⁵ V, 18, Cor.

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